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ABSTRACT

In an action research project, local citizens and community groups (often in collaboration with school professionals) investigate community-defined issues. Action research is geared to help people think clearly about an issue and find the resources they need to face it. In such a project, citizens develop skills in organizing, finding resources, gathering data, and analyzing the facts. They learn to evaluate data objectively, propose solutions, and act collectively to bring about change. Action research narrows the gap between social research and social change. This handbook details the process for getting the facts, organizing support, and following through. Chapter 1 explains how groups can organize for action research on an issue that concerns them. Chapter 2 describes fact-finding methods for action research, from stating the issue as a researchable problem to analyzing the facts. Chapter 3 suggests strategies for followup, from developing proposals to dealing with opposition. Action research aids and a resource directory complete the text. (Author/IRT)

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Facts for a Change

Citizen Action Research for Better Schools

by bill burges

Institute for Responsive Education

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Institute for Responsive Education
704 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts
02215
(617) 353-3309

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The INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIVE EDUCATION is a non-profit, tax exempt organization created to study and assist citizen participation in educational decision making. It is housed in the Department of System Development and Adaptation, School of Education, at Boston University.

I.R.E. STAFF

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Associate Director	Miriam Clasby
Communication	Barbara Prentice
Research Associate	Bill Burges
Projects Assistant	Louise Bonar

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INTRODUCTION

-- a letter from Texas --

A letter arrived for the Institute for Responsive Education from a woman in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. She wrote,

"I have been involved with a group of people for the last two years who have been trying very hard to change the (school) system through the election process. This method has not worked...

I now believe that the only way to change the situation is to somehow make the people realize that their children are being cheated...of course, we can't just tell people what is going on...They won't believe us. They have to find out for themselves. . .

It is with this problem that I'd like some help: What can we do to get the people to discover what is going on?"

As the year progressed, I.R.E. realized that the Texas letter did not describe an isolated case. In Massachusetts, similar situations surfaced in a community center and a neighborhood association in Boston, a citizen organization near Cape Cod, two student groups in Brockton, and in community education programs throughout the state.

From around the country, evidence mounted. When community people defined community issues that concerned them and organized to gather the facts on those issues, then positive change took place. This pattern was clear. It occured in Boston in setting transportation policy, in resolving racial tensions in a high school in New York State, in developing programs for the elderly in New Jersey, and in building several promising community development projects around Washington, D.C.

What's more, the process -- called citizen action-research -- was workable and appealing. A major action-research project to gather information on educational alternatives was already underway in New Haven. I.R.E. heard from a rural school principal, a Chicago community action center, a Buffalo School Board member, and many other individuals and groups. All saw action-research as a way to improve relationships between schools and communities.

At two conferences in Washington, school professionals and concerned citizens recognized action-research as a promising avenue of informed citizen participation. Field tests sponsored by I.R.E. in Massachusetts and Texas pointed to positive signs. In almost every case, similar characteristics came through.

Citizens and/or school officials wanted information about citizen participation, school desegregation, educational quality, after-school programs and other issues. They also wanted to stimulate increased citizen involvement in educational decision-making. Each group was discouraged about both politics-as-usual and politics-of-confrontation as tools for change. They wanted new approaches to help people "find out for themselves," and to develop communities as valuable resources for educational problem-solving. Like the correspondent from Texas, they were looking for something new.

Traditional school politics and the alternative of militant confrontation turn many people off. They discourage widespread, informed, and sustained citizen

involvement. What is needed is a new set of tools for involving parents and other citizens. Tools that:

- -Enable people to define issues that concern them;
- -Increase the level of knowledge and quality of communication about those issues;
- -Stimulate face-to-face interaction among people and between the people and their schools;
- -Develop and apply community leadership, talent, and resources;
- -Provide experiences that increase community capacity to understand and cope with tough problems.

-- citizen action-research --

Citizen action-research is one such tool. In an action-research project, local citizens and community groups (often in collaboration with school professionals) investigate community-defined issues. Action-research is geared to help people think clearly about an issue and find the resources they need to face it. In an action-research project, citizens develop skills in organizing, finding resources, gathering data, and analyzing the facts. They learn to evaluate data objectively, propose solutions, and act collectively to bring about change.

Action-research narrows the gap between social research and social change. Too many studies wind up in yesterday's newspaper because there has been no involvement by citizens in fact-finding or follow-up. Participation by the people who will be affected by policy and those who must act to make it happen is a form of community action that leads to change.

Obtaining and analyzing the facts does not guarantee social change. Action-research projects can create a mood that supports new ideas. But another step may be needed to implement these ideas. Once the facts are in, realistic proposals and strategies for putting them into practice should be employed. This handbook details the process for getting the facts, organizing support, and following through.

The process can be an effective one:

ITEM: In Springfield, Virginia, students and parents worked on curriculum evaluation projects that

led to the creation of a permanent parent-student watchdog organization.

ITEM: In Gloucester City, New Jersey, senior citizens did their own survey of elderly needs. In cooperation with the school system and the state, they assessed problems and developed recommendations for policy-makers.

ITEM: In Takoma Park-Silver Spring, Maryland, fact-finding led to the formation of a local foundation to foster new approaches to community problem-solving.

ITEM: In New Hyde Park, New York, high school students investigated problems of prejudice. They took their findings to the school administration and designed programs at the school's human relations lab to counteract student prejudices.

ITEM: In Dedham, Massachusetts, a three year League of Women Voters study of the public schools inspired the initiation of a town-wide, inter-agency coalition on public education.

The process is well tested, but infrequently reported. Action-research is a powerful tool for cutting problems down to size. The framework of research can be employed to stimulate informed citizen involvement.

-- for people concerned about education --

Readers concerned about education will find this handbook particularly useful. You know that something must be done. This handbook is a guide for how to go about it. It will help you to develop cooperation between public and private institutions, increase community awareness, and encourage active citizenship -- the roots of lasting change.

Although the handbook is concerned primarily with schools, it can be used effectively by people who are interested in education in its broadest sense. I.R.E. shares the view that education is a lifelong process. Education occurs in countless ways and is influenced by many nonschool developments.

A checklist of "educational" institutions that might concern you includes:

1. Public schools
2. Private schools
3. Libraries
4. Museums
5. Local businesses
6. Civic associations
7. Colleges and other postsecondary schools
8. Hospitals and health programs
9. Adult and community education programs
10. Government agencies and social programs
11. The media
12. Preschool programs
13. Alternative or unconventional projects
14. Police and fire departments
15. Job programs
16. Unions
17. In-service education programs
18. Consumer and client advocacy groups
19. Political parties
20. Outside groups that send information into your community, such as: advertisers, national media, and state and national organizations.

-- or other community problems --

You can do an action-research project on almost any problem in your community. Whether you are interested in the effects of local zoning policies, methods to stabilize taxation, the impact of highway construction, or any imaginable issue, action-research is a valuable tool. The process responds to citizen concerns on various levels. As you read through the handbook, think about how you might use it and in what situations it would be appropriate.

-- who can use the action-research method? --

I.R.E.'s experiences tell us that a wide array of groups will be interested in action-research. People concerned about schools find the process useful. Potential users under this category might be:

-School boards
-School/community councils
-PTA's and other parent groups

-Teacher organizations
-Student committees
-Town or citywide educational associations
-High school and college classes.

The process can also be helpful to broad or special interest community groups, including:

-Government officials
-Taxpayer associations
-Planning departments or committees
-Leagues of Women Voters
-Women's Clubs
-Civic associations
-Neighborhood organizations
-Advocacy groups
-Community action and development agencies
-Human rights organizations
-Senior citizen groups
-Women's rights organizations
-Consumer and tenant associations
-High School or college classes concerned about community problems
-Church-affiliated action groups.

Because action-research encourages cooperation rather than confrontation, and because it provides many tasks for people to tackle, coalitions of community groups and officials will find it a useful way of working together on common problems.

-- how to use this book --

Depending on your issue and its scope, you may want to use only certain sections of the handbook. All sections will not be useful for every group or every problem. Pick and choose. Use what is helpful. The text and aids are designed to be flexible, adaptable, and enjoyable.

CHAPTER ONE explains how groups can organize for action-research on an issue that concerns them. CHAPTER TWO describes fact-finding methods for action-research, from stating the issue as a researchable problem to analyzing the facts. CHAPTER THREE suggests strategies for follow-up, from developing proposals to dealing with opposition. ACTION-RESEARCH AIDS and a RESOURCE DIRECTORY complete the text.

The back cover lists I.R.E. ACTION-RESEARCH publications that go beyond this handbook in detailing specific action-research methods. Other I.R.E. PUBLICATIONS ON CITIZEN ACTION are also listed on the back cover.

-- acknowledgements --

The handbook is a product of a year-long project marked by field testing and broad imput. The interaction among I.R.E., concerned citizens, university faculty and students, community resource people, and a private foundation was the most enjoyable and productive feature of the Citizen Action-Research Project.

The handbook was considerably enriched by various community-led field tests. Among the many citizens who helped with that activity, the most significant contributions were made by Nancy Sleight, Gretta Estey, Margaret Boudiette, Nancy Haley, Jeanne Griffin, Phil Urbano, Kim Kelly, Cindy Talbert, Mary Ellen Salinas, and Bob Young. Experts on the process like Parker Palmer, Ed Trickett, Rich Sussman and Pat Hall shared their action-research experiences. Community resource people who volunteered their time to read, edit and react to the materials include Jack Reynolds, Winifred Friedman, Margo Volterra, Nancy Burges, Carmencieta Jones, Anne Murray, Beatrice Nyberg, and Elsa Martz. Their assistance was invaluable.

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Finally, and most importantly, we could not even have begun the Citizen Action-Research Project without the support of a grant from the Edward W. Hazen Foundation of New Haven, Connecticut. The interest of the Hazen Foundation and its Executive Director, William Bradley in community action is a great asset to active citizens across the country.

Bill Burges

May, 1976

CHAPTER ONE

GETTING ORGANIZED AROUND A WORKABLE ISSUE

I. DEVELOPING A CENTRAL IDEA

How many times has your group wanted to act on an issue, but been unable to organize, get the facts, or even define the problem? How many times have you looked into a local situation, but abandoned the search because you didn't know where to begin? Maybe the scope of the problem seemed overwhelming. How, for instance, could you possibly deal with the question of prejudice in local schools without confronting big issues like community and institutional racism? Students in New York did -- using action-research.

The key to citizen action-research is that it helps you cut big, complex problems down to manageable size. To scale down issues, the action-researcher insists on clarity and definition; on workable, understandable projects. You combine the discipline of the researcher with the sensitivity of the community organizer. Once you state an issue clearly and manageably, you can identify a project. You develop a sense of group competence, gain a clear understanding of a situation, and can prescribe an action solution.

The process of action-research is well tested. It can work for you. The first step is to develop your concern on the central idea that becomes your issue.

-- goals and motives --

At the very beginning, it is important to agree on why you are getting involved in an issue. Even for organizations with a clear agenda, this is a critical step.

Lack of clarity about concerns, issues, and problems is a thorny item for groups. Abstract labels like "open education," "back to the basics," "firm but fair discipline," "double standards," "community education," "equal athletic opportunity," and "law and order," make clarity and definition even more difficult. Too often, definition is ignored.

Newly forming groups should pay particular attention to their goals and motives. The problem is less pressing in larger and mature organizations. Subcommittees or task forces can agree about and work on

problems, as long as their work is consistent with the organization's overall goals. But smaller and new groups must avoid confusion about purpose.

Goals should be set at the outset. You don't have to be an expert to set organizational goals. A goal is simply a statement of intentions or purposes which you would like to achieve.

-A student who decides to master the metric system is setting an educational goal.
-A community group can set a goal to have a stronger say in developing the school budget.
-A school committee can set a goal to involve citizens in hiring teachers and principals.

Stating a goal gives your behavior direction. It may take a little extra time at the beginning of a project, but it is a step too often ignored or done casually. You'll have to take a close look at the alternative approaches to your issue. Then decide which one is most central to your group's concerns.

Since your issue could lead to several goals, choosing the most central one involves setting priorities. You might rank goals by having each person submit the one s/he considers most central. Then open the discussion of how the group should rank its goals. For some groups, ordering goals is quite natural. For others it is more difficult.* AID I will be helpful in developing goals for your group. (AID I is on page 145, following the text.)

While you develop initial agreement about goals, consider the question of motivation. Identifying your motives can help you develop a working definition of the issue that compels you to get involved, stay involved, and get others involved. In an honest, open, freewheeling discussion, try to answer the following in sequence:

-What concerns you?
-What's the basis of your interest in the issue?
-What values do you hold that relate to the issue?
-Why do you want to do what you are planning?
-What is it that's really bugging you?

Your group should clarify its reasons for tackling an action-research project on a specific issue. In

*Miriam Clasby, Together: Schools and Communities. I.R.E.: Boston, 1975, p.59.

doing so, you'll chase down some promising leads, refine and clarify individual concerns as well as focus the group's interest. People will be standing on common ground. When you know why you are going to act collectively, you'll become much more committed to working together. AID 2 will assist you in finding this common ground.

Some people may leave the project as a result of these discussions. That's normal and at times even healthy. If their interests don't mesh with the general scheme of things, they won't be happy with the project. They'll begin to wonder, "What am I doing here?" Their enthusiasm will wane. The project will suffer. Better to identify divergent values, motives, and goals early than to waste effort when disagreements frustrate your project later.

One of the great strengths of action-research is its emphasis on fact gathering as the basis for group decisions for change. Therefore it is important to recognize pre-conceived notions about both the problem and the solution held by people in your group. If action-research is used to manipulate the facts (and those who volunteer to gather them) toward predetermined solutions, then it will have little credibility and will alienate more people than it attracts.

In short, if you "know the answers" in advance, don't get involved in action-research. The only desirable strategy is to keep the research honest.

-- put the central issue in one breath --

The next task is to develop a "one-breath" definition of the central issue. You may find yourself doing some between-meeting homework. Digging up relevant books and articles, making on-site observations, or meeting with other informed people sheds light on the issue. You may want to poll some friends informally, to estimate "where the community is" on your issue.

One excellent strategy is to divide up a series of "homework assignments." Then each of you can report back to the whole group after a week or two. At that meeting, the information you've gathered will help you move from a broad area of concern to a well-defined issue that appeals to your community.

If you find that other groups have already studied or acted on your issue, don't duplicate that work. But learn from the successes and mistakes of the past. You can model your project on the successes of other groups. You can use their work as "jumping off points" for your action-research project. You can attempt to make change in areas that have resisted it in the past. But don't reinvent the wheel. Your issue should have a new slant, a slant that reflects your concerns.

Attempt to find out if any other local groups are about to launch a project similar to yours. If the issue you are looking into is a controversial one, as may well be the case, other organizations might also have plans to act on it. If another group has a similar style and interest, you might encourage them to join you in an action-research project. It makes sense to get involved with other organizations capable of commanding respect in the community.

As you put the issue into one breath, strive for a statement or question that reflects your goals and motives. That statement or question - called the central issue - should lead to honest inquiry, public understanding, and an atmosphere in which realistic proposals can ultimately be made. Thus a broad area of concern such as "Equal Athletic Opportunity" becomes a central issue such as "How much do your schools spend on girls' sports compared to boys' sports?"

Your central issue probably can be presented in several ways. However you present it, avoid unclear labels and keep it brief.

-- creating initial public interest --

Early in the project you'll want to let the public know what you're doing. You'll want to stimulate public knowledge about the central issue and your activities. As people begin to think about the problem, they may be willing to join you in doing something about it.

Parker Palmer and Elden Jacobsen, authors of I.R.E.'s Action-Research: A New Style of Politics in Education, summarize how to get started:

> The first stage of an action-research program offers excellent opportunities for bringing people along. One might try to define the problem by holding neighborhood hearings to discover what issues are on people's minds, hosting a series of living room discussions throughout the community, or running a series in the local newspaper inviting response. There are many devices available for collectively defining an issue, and the point we wish to make is simple.
>
> While most research begins in the mind of the researcher, action-research begins by developing that focus out of the larger community. It is important to do so, even when the leader thinks s/he knows what is on people's minds, for it is critical that an action-research program be owned by the community from the very outset.*

*Parker Palmer and Elden Jacobsen, Action-Research: A New Style of Politics in Education, I.R.E., Boston, 1974, pp.12-13.

How to develop constructive interest is a difficult problem when you are dealing with a highly controversial issue or working in a politically charged environment. The important thing is to discourage political campaign-style opposition. At this point, you don't need heavy-handed response from public officials or opponenents. The emphasis is not on conflict.

Action-research has built-in advantages that help head off this problem.

-The research mode can be used to avoid the appearance of politics. Potential adversaries can be urged to join your fact-finding effort.

-A "blue ribbon panel" of community leaders can be asked to oversee the project and lend prestige, even if their actual participation is limited.

-Issues can be presented to the community in neutral terms that are widely acceptable. Each of these tactics adds credibility to your project.

At the same time, don't let the fact that opposition exists or is possible discourage you. Get started. I.R.E. worked with one group that bogged down for many months waiting for the "other side" to join the project. Naturally, a feeling of failure and inaction set in.

Action-research offers a number of ways to avoid needless conflict, but you shouldn't delay too long in trying to cultivate allies. Recognize that some groups will never join you. They won't necessarily oppose you either. And potential allies may become active supporters later in the project.

You'll also want to "bring enough people along" to recruit volunteers. If at this point, for instance, only four or five of you are involved, invite ten or fifteen friends to a meeting. If each of you brings two or three people, you've made your quota. Later in this chapter, there's more on recruiting volunteers.

You might send a notice to your mailing list, run an ad, hold a community hearing, issue a press release, or influence the local media to cover your group and its issue. Make a public announcement about an upcoming meeting or event. (In Chapter III, and AID 14, you'll find more information on how to do so.)

The point is simple. Developing public awareness can do more than raise the community's level of awareness. It can be the first step in organizing the volunteers you'll need to carry out the project.

II. ORGANIZING AN ACTION-RESEARCH GROUP

As you already know, action-research is a change strategy that can be used by a group working alone, or by a coalition of two or more groups working cooperatively. Within the bounds of practicality, building an action-research group that represents more than one organization or constituency is the best strategy. You don't want to invite participation by interests you anticipate to be destructive. In general, however, action-research offers unusually promising possibilities for working together.

Some of those possibilities have already been outlined. Many more exist. The need for collaboration is so pressing, especially in educational affairs, that the point deserves further attention before any discussion of the "nuts and bolts" of organizing an action-research group begins.

-- narrowing the gap --

Citizens need to cut through the complex maze confronting community problem solving. It is critical that community people and institutions work together. But distrust between institutions and professionals, and the public they serve, is growing.

Some people are concerned and active; others are alienated and apathetic. But people everywhere recognize that political promises and "professional" decisions have limited value if made in the absence of accountability to and input from the community.

The credibility gap is particularly wide between the public and the schools, which Americans are giving lower marks each year. What is needed is an approach in which community people and school professionals work together to narrow the gap.

-- working together --

Working together will not always mean harmonious collaboration. Adversary relations, channeled through action-research and other structures however, can be productive rather than acrimonious. Action-research

offers a framework for cooperation.

What does this mean? The commitment to collaboration is not so much ideological as practical. Schools and their publics are stuck with one another. They are locked into constant interaction in many ways. But too often school people and citizens don't interact to work on educational problems.

Collaboration should be part of your change strategy for the following reasons:

-It encourages the participation of people who are turned off by confrontation, too often perceived as part of community action.

-It activates the idea that participation of both citizens and school professionals is the root of real change.

-It develops community commitment by involving all parties likely to be affected by change.

-It gives parents, students, and other nonprofessionals more voice within the structure of institutions that affect them.

-It reduces the feelings of powerlessness and alienation resulting from unresponsive policymakers and bureaucrats.

-It helps policy makers and bureaucrats become more responsive.

-It contributes to a "sense of community."

-It improves the ways in which schools and other institutions share community resources.

-It improves the ways in which the community utilizes school resources.

-It encourages school programs that reflect racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity.

-It engages the community in discussion of long-range purposes of schools and education, and in long-range planning.*

*adapted from Clasby, p.83.

These points are practical. They apply to every community. In New Jersey, parents and school professionals in every school district are meeting to set educational goals and design programs. Florida has mandated school/community councils. All around America, school and community people are working together to improve the schools.

Working together should be uppermost in your mind as you build an action-research group. It emphasizes common concerns rather than the divisiveness that so often develops needlessly in community affairs.

-- you'll need leadership --

To plan and carry out an action-research project, you'll need solid leadership. The usual leadership arrangement is to have a chairperson (or co-chairpeople) and a project steering committee. These are reinforced by subcommittee leaders and/or people who take on other active roles in the project.

Some groups assign these roles to their elected officers. Others prefer to develop new sources of energy and leadership from those waiting in the wings. The latter approach is wise if you want to develop future leaders and broaden your base.

A third approach is to form an action-research steering committee as a subcommittee of your organization's board. Taking that tack allows the established leadership to sponsor and oversee the project, but opens opportunities for leadership to any member.

You'll need people who can assume the responsibilities for:

-Managing action-research activities;
-Maintaining group commitment;
-Building community support;
-Developing strategies for change;
-Keeping morale high.

People like this can be found in almost any organization or citizen group. Turning those human resources into the sustained leadership that gets the job done, however, requires organization.

-- the chairperson --

The chairperson(s) should have the energy, know-how and time to get things done. Do not choose a leader who is already overcommitted. The old adage about "asking a busy person if you want something done" probably will not apply to your action-research project chairman.

Keep the following criteria for a chairperson in mind:

- -Time and skills to do the job;
- -Interest in and understanding of the action-research approach;
- -Ability to command the respect of the group;
- -Competence in working with people;
- -Knowledge of the community and its resources.

Don't blow these criteria out of proportion. You don't need a professional campaign manager or an expert on research. You need enthusiasm and competence. There are undoubtedly many candidates among you.

-- a steering committee --
(or working board)

The second important component in your leadership structure is a steering committee to:

- -Provide broad direction to the project chairperson(s);
- -Provide active subcommittee leadership;
- -Assist in all project activities;
- -Recruit volunteers;
- -Raise funds, if necessary;
- -Develop grassroots support;
- -Communicate with community influentials.

Your group's board might be an ideal steering committee, especially if it's a board that really likes to "get involved." You might, alternatively, send a bulletin to your mailing list or publicize the project in local papers to recruit candidates for the steering committee. Don't get more than ten or fifteen members, however. A steering committee larger than that is unwieldy.

Although steering committee involvement may be limited in some projects, members of the steering committee play active roles in most projects. Steering committee members should be working committees. Steering committee members should be assigned to head subcommittees. This assures communication links between overall project coordination and specific tasks.

For most projects, any enthusiastic member of your group could be a good steering committee member. For larger, community-wide projects -- especially those that require funding -- a "blue ribbon panel" may be best. Keep the following criteria in mind as you form a steering committee:

-Respect from the organization(s) with which they must work;
-Time, interest, and know-how;
-Knowledge of the community;
-Access to human resources, materials;
-Ability to raise funds, if necessary;
-Special skills needed by your group;
-Ability to work with people.

One other function of the steering committee is so important that it deserves special notice:

The steering committee must set up ground rules for itself and other work groups.

Projects cease to be enjoyable and productive when groups get bogged down.

Set your own ground rules. You know how your group works most effectively. These suggestions may be helpful for steering committees:

1. Set up a schedule with flexible deadlines in which to work. Action-Research projects can take anywhere from a month to two years or more. Be realistic.

2. Early in the process, let people bring up their particular gripes, even if it seems like "ax grinding." We all need to feel that our pet peeve is worthy of group recognition. Pretty soon, the steam will blow off and you can go on to broader items.

3. The climate or atmosphere of each group and the overall project should be such that disagreements are open and above board. Letting conflicts simmer beneath the surface is unhealthy and will come back to haunt you, perhaps at a crucial moment. So air those disagreements and treat them as normal. The best ideas often emerge from arguments.

4. The leadership must maintain task focus in the group. The role of the leader who sees an endless or irrelevant argument recurring might say "Let's get on with the task" or "Why don't you two take this up later?"

5. A particular strength of action-research is that disagreements can be cast as alternate hypotheses or question items. This is illustrated in more detail later. The results will decide who's right.

6. Leaders should not be afraid to call on other participants or outsiders to help them resolve conflicts that seem to be getting out of hand. A fresh perspective often helps alleviate communication problems and disagreements in groups.

7. Let common sense be your guide. Major conflicts, the most serious of which might be a split in the interpretation of results, demand more attention than

minor disagreements.

-- the division of labor --

If you divide the project into tasks, large numbers of people can get involved. Volunteers with different levels of commitment and amounts of time can contribute to the project. Having a wide range of opportunities for contribution is important. Involve people at levels that they find personally meaningful and socially useful.

If they like what they're doing, their commitment will increase. The cycle of involvement is natural. Given a legitimate issue, a prescription for action, and manageable tasks, volunteers will get involved and stay involved.

One example of how you can divide labor comes from an action-research group in Virginia. In order to study the impact of a single semester on students at the local high school, they organized as follows:

-Co-chairpersons of the Steering Committee. Will coordinate tasks and chair meetings.

-Public Relations Chairperson. Will have the heaviest responsibility at times of community hearings (to develop issues and gain visibility) and for research reports (in public forums). Continuous responsibility for dealing with local news media, publicity for community events, and regular newsletter to a mailing list of interested people.

-Five Worker Recruiters. Will recruit one hundred interviewers from community groups, churches, and from searches for unaffiliated people. Will hold living-room "brain-storming" sessions with these recruits to develop ideas for questionnaire (thus giving interviewers a sense of involvement in the final questionnaire).

-Events Manager. Will schedule and coordinate community events, secure speakers, arrange meeting places, etc. Will develop morale through planning events for workers (e.g., showing films).

-Four questionnaire-Preparation and Field Interview Supervisors. Will work with Worker

Recruiters at living-room "brain-storming" sessions; then work with consultant to put the questionnaire together in a technically valid form. Will get lists of names from the school, draw random samples, and make interview assignments. Will set up training sessions for interviewers, supervise interviewing process, and be available for problems that arise during the course of interviews.

-One hundred interviewers. Conduct interviews using the questionnaire.

-Two Data Analysis Supervisors. Will receive completed questionnaires, collate and do basic correlations, put data in form for presentation in newsletter, community forums, etc.*

This division of labor was supplemented by a schedule. Dates for task completion were outlined and charted in relationship to the overall project purpose and other tasks. With this clear, concise format, the project moved smoothly. Since then, the group has incorporated as a permanent, non-profit community organization. It uses action-research as a framework for dealing with other community and school problems.

AID 22 illustrates one way of dividing labor and structuring activities. Discuss it. How extensive an organization will you need to deal with your issue? These questions will come into clearer focus in the pages ahead, but you should be thinking about them already.

-- recruiting volunteers --

In the project outlined above and others like it, average people -- students, senior citizens, housewives, businesspersons, teachers -- demonstrated their ability to lead and carry out action-research projects. The critical task that you face is finding enough people to play the variety of roles that comprise an action-research group.

Many of your friends and neighbors share the belief that they are, as citizens, obligated to help on projects that benefit the community. Networks based

*Palmer and Jacobsen, pp. 29-30.

on personal ties or organizational affiliations can be tapped to turn that belief into an able cadre of volunteers. Seek volunteers energetically. Urge volunteers to encourage their friends to join the project.

Friends and their friends are almost always the best source of volunteers. If you can identify people who share your concern about an issue, then you've got another good source. Parents and high school students, for instance, are likely to be intrigued by school issues. The trick here is to strike a responsive chord.

Service organizations and civic groups are already involved in the community. If you can't interest them in joining your project as organizations, perhaps they'll let you use their membership lists to recruit individuals. The League of Women Voters, Jaycees, Kiwanis, church groups, neighborhood associations, student service clubs, and the other organizations listed in the Introduction are representative of the wide range of community groups. Your town or city clerk will have a list of agencies and organizations in your locale.

Working with one or more other organizations makes it easier to recruit volunteers. In Indiana, a network of friends, families, and organizational contacts generated 700 volunteers for an action-research program on community health needs. Mutually supportive organizations involved far more people and created more interest than any one group could have. All the volunteers weren't "turned on" by the issue at hand, but they participated for a variety of reasons such as obligations to individuals or groups, friendships, etc. The volunteers came from an informal network -- a network which is within reach of most coalitions.

In another example, the Coalition for Peaceful Integration in Springfield, Massachusetts was formed in 1974 by eight major groups and about two hundred people who sponsored a Peaceful Integration Congress. The Congress built communication links to make information on Springfield's desegregation plan available throughout the city. From that starting point, they signed up even more volunteers to assist in the orderly implementation of desegregation in Springfield.

SHARE of Wareham, Inc., a citizen organization, was able to recruit about 50 volunteers from 65 phone calls by relying on personal friendships and people who expressed prior interest in the organization.

When you are trying to "get out the troops," the best method is to list anyone you think may help. Then ask them directly. Be sure to explain the nature of the project. Stress any personal ties they may have to your group. There's no substitute for face-to-face solicitation here, but telephone requests can also work well. Hopefully you'll be able to get a person's interest in the project, obligation to a group member, or sense of community to surface. Once that happens, you've got yourself a volunteer.

A series of articles in the community paper or coverage by local radio or T.V. stations can attract support. State your goals. Be sure to list meeting times and phone numbers for potential volunteers. The impact of local papers and media is incredible in situations like this. So seek out cooperative reporters, editors, station managers and talk-show hosts. They are often receptive to "public service" oriented material.

You can use other techniques too. Store window posters catch the eye. If you can design an attractive poster that explains your cause and gives meeting dates and phone numbers, you may get some response. Another method is the community hearing, where you invite prospective volunteers and present your case. Visual techniques like charts and slide shows can help generate a corps of volunteers if used at a series of these hearings.

Finally, your organization's newsletter can attract volunteers.

Approach people with the idea that they are important and that their help is necessary. Ask them what they would like to do. Remember that an action-research project has room for differing viewpoints, skills, interests, and time commitments. If your idea is a good

one, you'll get all the help you need by using the techniques outlined above.*

-- enlisting the aid of "consultants" --

Most citizen groups cannot afford to hire long-term consultants. Even if they could, projects organized, controlled, and carried out by local citizens have the greatest potential for lasting impact. Communities must define their own issues, and develop the competence to deal with them effectively. Nonetheless, the help of a consultant or resource person can be a valuable element in a community project.

Locating free or inexpensive help and becoming aware of how to use it is one important part of an action-research program. Learning to tap resources is a fundamental part of building an effective community group.

It is often useful to check community thinking against professional thinking. But don't fall into the trap of believing that the "academic experts" have the answers to your problems. Alas, such is not the case. What do you do when three, five or ten experts appear before you with as many different opinions? What will you think when you discover that

*Adapted from Nancy Stetzelberger, "Recruiting Volunteers," unpublished, Wheelock College, 1975.

'What to do and how to do it?" is not even the question most on the minds of academics, for it is not a question demanded by their work of research and publication and scholarly debate?*

The help of academics can be valuable, but be sure that they share your concerns. The most valuable assistance you can get will be from someone who can help you identify and tap the centers of expertise in your area. Such a person can tell you about the group of public interest lawyers who share your concern, the university professor who works with community groups, the engineer who can get you the information you need to stop a road-widening. Someone with contacts in the professional community can be invaluable.

Other important resource people are those who can

-Give general advice about organizing;
-Help develop ideas around your issue;
-Find free or inexpensive materials and facilities;
-Provide technical research assistance;
-Assist in the resolution of intragroup conflict;
-Provide specialized services such as typing or fund raising;
-Help generate proposals for change from the results of your action-research.

When you need "expert assistance," call on resource people in your own community or a neaby city. Your group probably knows about people who can be very helpful. In New Haven, Connecticut, for instance, ten citizens staffing an action-research project quickly developed a long list of resources available through personal contacts alone.

Other groups have not always been as successful. In some instances, they have been reluctant to ask for help. Sometimes they have been unaware of sources of help, such as:

-Community agencies, advocacy groups, and church staff members;
-Labor union leaders;
-Community organizers;
-Students, teachers, school officials;
-Local businesspersons and lawyers;

*Palmer and Jacobsen, p. 2

-Sympathetic politicians and bureaucrats;
-University faculty;
-Journalists, and public relations and media people;
-Fundraisers;
-Secretaries and typists.

In general, getting technical assistance, materials and facilities will not present major problems. Many people are willing to devote time, skills, and other resources to worthy community projects if they are asked for a limited, structured commitment. Your task is to identify and enlist them. Many of the techniques outlined under "recruiting volunteers" apply here.

As you recruit resource people, let them know what you want. And don't -- at least initially -- ask for too much. You might ask someone to type a final report, but not handle all the secretarial work for the project. You might ask someone to assist in writing questions and analyzing data, but don't expect him/her to be a research consultant at your beck and call.

Ask for limited commitments. Outline jobs that have a beginning, middle and end. If your project sparks someone's interest, s/he will let you know. Unless you are precise in asking for help, you'll find resource people losing interest, saying "no" or ...

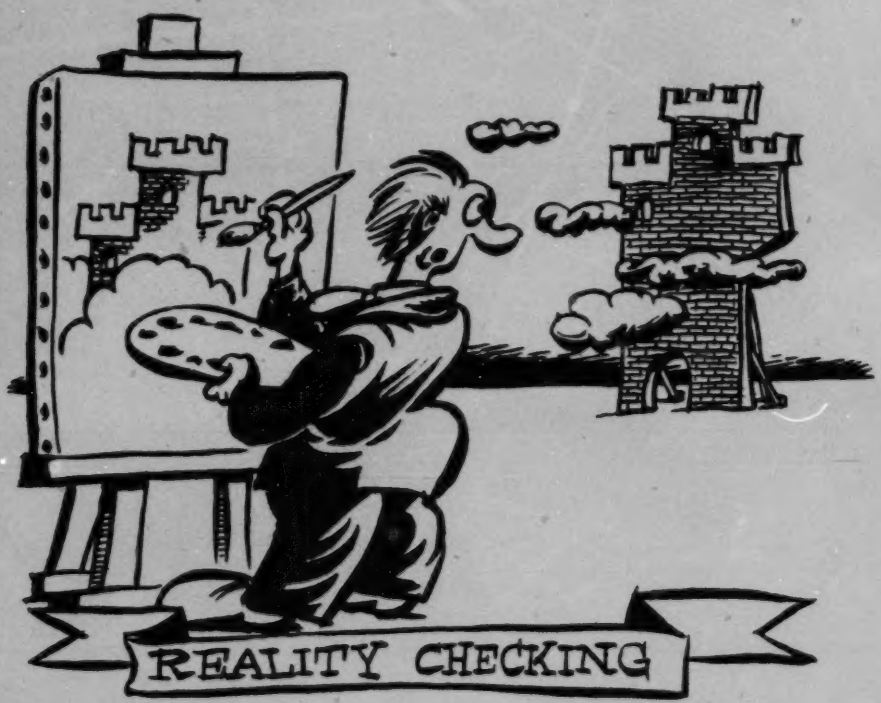
...taking over. This suggests that the motives and agendas of both your group and the resource person must be expressed openly and honestly. An above-board airing of roles is particularly important if your group plans to rely heavily on experts. Since the community must "own" the project, the community should prevail when agendas clash. I.R.E.'s experiences in New Haven, Brockton, and Wareham indicate that such an arrangement leads to good working relations.

Since resource people can be so useful, assess those needed for the project you are planning. Too many groups get "in over their heads" by misreading the scope of their projects and the limits of their resources. Such confusion can lead to frustration and wasted energy.

-- reality checking --

One way to keep your expectations in line with your resource potential is to compile a checklist. List all the resources -- time, money, equipment, expert assistance, materials, facilities, etc. -- you think you will need. Then, using AID 4, list those that are available. Compare.

If you've been thinking realistically about resources -- expert and other -- the lists probably match up pretty well. If that's the case, get started. But if the "available" list falls short of the "needs" list, then scale your project down.



Another way to determine whether or not your project is "do-able" is to ask yourself, "What is the difference between what we need and what is available? What social, political, or economic forces add to or subtract from the chances for success? What's the climate for change in this community?"

You can set up a balance sheet, much like a bookkeeper or an accountant, to determine your chances of success. Set up a balance sheet, using AID 5 for each

important factor (Climate for change, Resources, etc.). On one side of the balance sheet, list forces favoring your success. On the other side, list forces working against you.

Using AID 5 and a chalk board or large pad that everyone can see, list and evaluate these forces or conditions. Whole group discussion is a good way to evaluate them. Another method is to ask each person to draw up individual balance sheets. Then each person reports. Analyze by discussing each balance sheet.

Having a clear idea of the forces favoring and hindering your project is vitally important. The resource listing and balance sheet exercises should help your Steering Committee assess what is realistic. Remember, it is better to seek small changes that can snowball than to overestimate your potential and dampen your enthusiasm for future projects. Remember the old adage, "Nothing succeeds like success, and nothing fails..."

If you are having trouble assessing your potential to undertake a project, call in an experienced activist or organizer to discuss the situation.

Even established groups might choose small projects for their first experience with action-research. Projects that aim at parent-teacher communication, compiling neighborhood resource directories, opening school facilities to the community, or increasing local knowledge of politics are important, even if modest. What's more, small projects build feelings of success and familiarize you with the action-research process. This paves the way for more ambitious projects in the future.

-- outline a plan --

When you're convinced that your project idea is realistic, you'll br brimming over with confidence. You like your issue. You're getting organized. There's some light at the end of the tunnel. At this point, commit an outline of your thinking to paper.

Use AID 6. It's a skeletal planning aid that stresses "Who-What-How-When-Where." Outline anticipated activities. Develop a rough time-line. All

these will probably be revised, but it adds structure and discipline if you put your ideas in writing. You are moving into the meat of your project.

CHAPTER TWO: A STEP-BY-STEP PROGRAM OF ACTION-RESEARCH

Your group is formed. Your issue defined. It's time for your action-research program to come alive.

Your group has its own style and needs, but your action-research efforts will include the following stages:

1. Turning your central issue into a researchable problem;
2. Breaking the researchable problem into its most important parts;
3. Choosing your fact-finding techniques;
4. Collecting and analyzing data;
5. Using the data to make proposals for change.

The first four of these stages are discussed in this chapter; the fifth in Chapter Three.

STAGE I: TURNING THE ISSUE INTO A RESEARCHABLE PROBLEM

Once the issue is defined, turn it into a researchable problem. Researchable problems can be presented as statements or questions. However you word your researchable problems, make sure it reflects what your group wants to know. This is an important point. The wording reflects your assessment of a situation, and helps order your priorities.

Since you can't investigate everything about an issue, you must set priorities. Wording your problem is an effective way to focus on the information you need. Clearly, this step has great influence on the rest of the project.

-- in a town near Cape Cod --

In the seaside town of Wareham, Massachusetts, a strong citizen organization (SHARE, Inc.) concerned about public schools chose the issue of "citizen participation in educational decisions."

In order to focus their research, they could have framed any of several researchable problems:

-Why aren't citizens involved in educational

decisions?
-A study of participation in educational decisions.
-How can our citizens become more involved in school decision-making?
-Do citizens want to be involved?
-Do school professionals want them to be involved?
-Do people have enough information about the schools?

Several possible researchable problems were discussed before they chose:

Are people in Wareham interested in or involved in educational decisions? If so, how? If not, why not? And how can the situation be improved?

These questions comprised their researchable problem. The group's commitment to citizen participation in educational affairs came through clearly, and enabled SHARE to gather useful facts and act on them.

SHARE gave itself a focus and framework. Although "How can the situation be improved?" was only touched slightly in their project, their answer came from the data gathered in dealing with the other parts of the researchable problem. By giving themselves a framework for study, they also developed a focus for follow-up action.

-- A High School Course Evaluation --

SHARE worded their problem as a question. But declarative statements can also be used.

I.R.E. worked with a high school class in the city of Brockton, Massachusetts. The students were initially discouraged by the thought of a project dealing with the school. Why? Not from apathy, but because previous student efforts to change the school were vague and fruitless.

Even discussions of school issues seemed vague, unable to cut through the complexity of a 6500 student institution. Several members of the class, however, stated a problem so clear that the group's reluctance disappeared:

"Let's publish a course evaluation guide for the classes at BHS."

That kind of specificity was energizing. Suddenly they could visualize a project. They could understand goals: to raise consciousness about course and teacher quality, to assist students and parents in choosing courses, and to give student feedback to faculty and administration.

They immediately began to focus on potential processes for their project:

"How about a survey?"

"Will we just do the courses we're taking? All the courses? Or a sample?"

"You mean we're going to ask teachers if we can sit in and observe their classes?"

Similarly, they could anticipate products:

"A guide that will come out in January. Just before kids sign up for next year!"

"What about a Parent's Guide to Brockton High?"

"We could speak to all the entering freshmen about our results. And give them A Guide to the System."

"How many of these things are we going to put out anyway?"

At Brockton High, wording the researchable problem as a simple, clear sentence gave their whole project clarity.

-- the need for clarity --

Most people want and need structure. Your group will want to know what to expect -- the outlines of your project, where your group is heading, and what will be asked of them.

The alternative is to fall into an all-too familiar dilemma. You're concerned. Your issues are important. But you're stymied in endless discussions about what you are going to do. People stop coming to your meetings.

This can be avoided by thinking in terms of products and stating your problem clearly. That way you can get started on opening the issue, finding the facts, and building support for change.

Criteria for Researchable Problems

1. The researchable problem should be brief and unambiguous. It should reflect the goals of the project. It is helpful to mention the method you plan to use or the products you hope to develop. Combining these three things in the problem gives you a handy capsule of your plan. Your group can understand it, as can the community. It can energize both your membership and potential recruits.

2. Your researchable problem can be worded either as a declarative sentence or as a question, whichever is clearer.

3. Researchable problems can be solved (or answered) by evidence.

Avoid problems that are entirely opinion or value judgment. Similarly, don't focus on problems for which you have no access to evidence.

Avoid questions reminiscent of the medieval query, "How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?" They're not answerable, at least not by you.

Also stay away from questions with words such as "ought to," "should," "better or worse than," or other expressions of bias. Problem statements that include these words are usually based on pet peeves, personal biases, or articles of faith. The expressions above are examples of red flags -- danger signals that you are going beyond the bounds of what is researchable.

"Why don't parents participate in the local PTA as much as they ought to?", for instance, is based on a preconceived bias in favor of PTA participation. Why not simply ask "Why don't parents participate in

PTA?" See AID 7 for more examples.

4. Ideas and terms in the problem should mean the same thing to each member of the group. Define them. State the way in which they will be measured.

This means that important ideas and words need to be discussed. Say your group's question is, "Do citizens adequately participate in educational affairs?" It's a straightforward, researchable problem. But there are nonetheless items that need defining.

Who, for instance, are "citizens?" You probably mean people who are not professional educators. But do you mean the school board too? What about students? Do you just mean parents? Or are other community residents included?

What about "participate?" SHARE of Wareham used the following to indicate participation:

-Attendance at school open houses, parent-teacher conferences, school board meetings, budget hearings and other community forums.

-Membership in parent-teacher or other community organizations.

-Involvement in child-related activities such as youth hockey, church groups, Little League, scouting, etc.

-Service as a school volunteer.

-Amount and character of communication with the school system about education.

Participation is a crucial term on which the entire researchable problem hinges. Defining it and developing indicators of it, are important tasks.

The term "adequately" is also significant. It's your measure of participation. How much is adequate?

Suppose one indicator of participation is the number of candidates for vacancies on the school board. Are four candidates for each vacancy an adequate amount? Suppose voting in school board elections is

part of your definition. What is an adequate voter turnout? If you define participation as membership in a citizens' group, communication with the school system, or attendance at various meetings, you need to decide what amount of each constitutes adequate participation.

Finally, what is meant by "educational affairs?" Until that is defined, you can't deal with the term participate. You don't know what people are supposed to be participating in!

In Wareham, with an unusually well-knit study group, these definitions evolved slowly, in a de facto manner. After awhile, people knew what everyone else meant. Even a well-knit group, however, is better off defining terms as early and as explicitly as possible.

Defining the terms in the researchable problem is particularly crucial when diverse individuals and/or groups cooperate on action research. Each may have its own outlook and vocabulary. Agree upon meanings early in your project. AID 8 outlines a process for doing this.

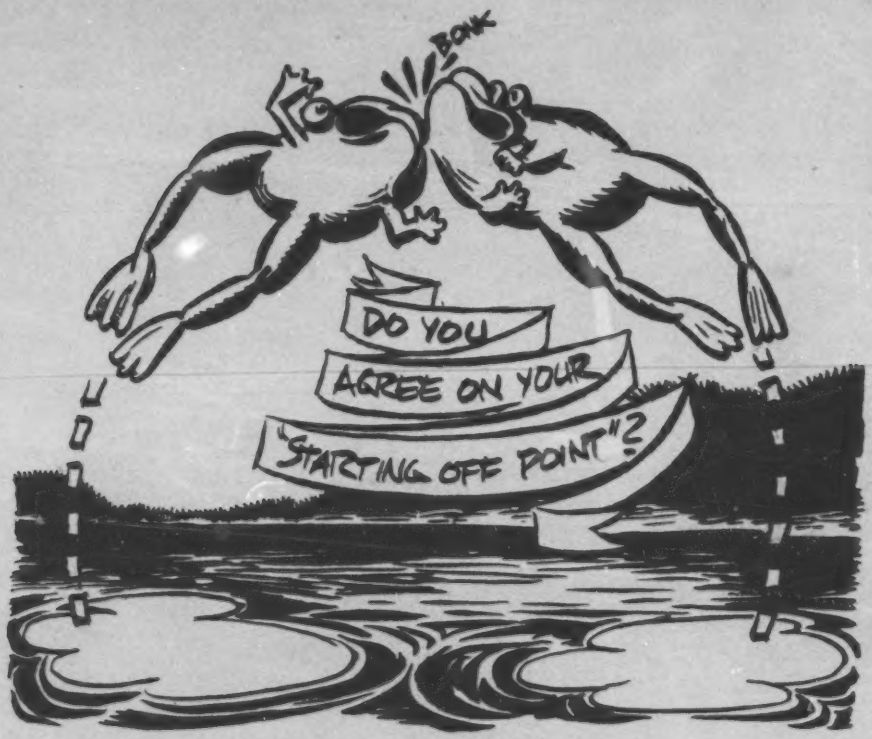
5. Researchable problems have "jumping off points."

You make certain assumptions as you develop a researchable problem. The problem statement "Why don't citizens adequately participate in educational affairs?" is based on the assumption (or jumping off point) that they should. It is also based on the assessment that citizens are not participating adequately. The question then becomes, "Why not?"

An alternative is to choose a jumping off point that does not begin with your position. You could ask, "Do people believe that they are adequately participating in educational affairs?" Starting with this question might be a good way to involve people who would shun a project that starts with your position on the issue.

Potential opponents (those who believe that people don't want to participate or are participating fully, for instance) might be willing to work with you. This creates dialogue and communication around questions of attitude and fact. It also forces your group to deal with new input--to check your position

against other people's positions.



6. Within limits, researchable problems are flexible.

The research problem provides focus for your action-research project. But circumstances may force you to rethink your position or re-define your problem. Research is not always a logical and predictable process.

-- wording the issue as a researchable problem: a suggested process --

The final task of wording the problem is best done in a small group. However, opportunities for involving a large number of people exist in the process of turning your central issue into a researchable problem. As many people as possible should be involved.

One way to generate participation is by asking people to take on various tasks. Ask some to check background materials in old newspaper files. Others

can check books and magazines in the library. Still others can interview their friends. Each person can then submit a separate version of the problem for group discussion.

Another approach is to hold a meeting to explain the issue. Without taking questions from the floor, break those in attendance into small workshops. The task of each group is to write a researchable problem.

A third time-tested, interesting process for involving people begins with brainstorming. Call a meeting. Have refreshments there to help people to get to know each other and feel at ease. Then using AID 9 conduct a rigorous half hour or hour of brainstorming.

Brainstorming produces a long list of ideas. They need sorting and categorizing. A few people must review the long list and draft the problem statement.

Next, the draft is submitted to the people who participated in the brainstorming and to the project steering committee. You may want approval. You may simply want to keep people informed. Either way, this is an important step in keeping communication open within your group.

STAGE II: BREAKING DOWN THE PROBLEM

Once the issue has been stated as a researchable problem, decide what parts are most important to you. You won't be able to look at everything. This step requires you to set specific priorities for investigation.

Observations, background reading, in-depth interviews, group discussions, and preliminary surveys are some of the ways you can find out what's most important. Once you've done this preliminary assessment, you can organize your study.

A. An Exploratory Study: How To Do It...Why Do It?

Breaking down the problem means finding the most fruitful paths of investigation. This is a preliminary, exploratory step. It can save you hours of travel down the wrong research roads. It helps you to gather initial evidence, check out your ideas, and generate new ones.

Start by asking exploratory questions that can be discarded or expanded into areas of inquiry. These may be nothing more than hunches. At this point you're just snooping around. If your hunches seem plausible after a few days or weeks, they can be tested in-depth in the major part of your action-research project.

We know of a group that began to investigate overcrowding in a large urban high school. Before starting on a long research road, they might do:

Observations ...spend time at their school and other schools. What can be observed about overcrowding? How might it be defined? What seem to be its effects? Are there patterns of crowding? What other forces seem to be relevant to the problem of overcrowding? Irrelevant? Where is overcrowding most severe: classrooms, corridors, study halls, cafeterias, certain departments? What can be seen or heard that forms the basis for further study?

Depth Interviews...Discuss the problem with people most affected by it. How do parents feel? Teachers? Students? School officials? Taxpayers? Talk to knowledgeable experts in the field. What do educational researchers say about overcrowding? Psychologists? Classroom teachers? Can they suggest promising approaches to investigating the problem? Can they tell you what's already been tried to solve the problem? Are they willing to help you?

Background readings...What evidence is there in books or articles about the effects of overcrowding? What seems to happen in schools as a result of overcrowding? How do other people define it? Who else has studied it? What solutions or recommendations have they proposed? What can be applied to your problem?

Preliminary surveys...Using a small sample, find out how local residents, school professionals, and students feel about the problem and its effects.

Intragroup discussions...How does the action-research group perceive the problem? Is it politically realistic to think that it can be solved? If so, to what degree? What questions do you have the potential

to pursue? What ones are most likely to generate public interest and support? Raise public understanding?

-- it's a bottom-up process --

By engaging in a limited exploratory study, the group investigating overcrowding could have narrowed their concerns to several aspects of the problem. For instance, they might have decided that their priorities revolved around answering any or all of the following questions:

1. The pattern of overcrowding is uneven. Why is it more severe in some subjects and levels than in others?

2. What are the effects of this pattern?

3. Is there a relationship between crowding and the increase in discipline problems?

4. Is student achievement affected by class size?

5. Five ideas for solving the problem emerged during exploratory research. Which, if any, are viable for the school, the community?

Let's review. From the endless array of ways to approach overcrowding, your group can decide which are most relevant. It's almost impossible to do that without exploratory research. In almost every case, you'll want to take your lead from the situation itself. Experience it. Check into how it's been approached by others.

By using unstructured techniques such as interviewing, observation, and background reading, you get an "early line" on the researchable problem. This is helpful later. Some hunches and tips are discarded, others played heavily. New hunches develop as you get a few facts and opinions. Those that are most supportable guide the rest of your research problem.

An exploratory study provides many opportunities to involve people. Each of the techniques mentioned so far appeals to different personalities. Some people may be willing to spend all day in the library;

others prefer to be first-line observers. Some may be turned on by the thought of interviewing some students; others may wish to talk to a university professor over lunch.

Exploratory research is also a step for attracting new workers and resource people. Students, teachers, and parents who are asked about the problem should also be asked to volunteer for the action-research project. A university professor asked for advice at the exploratory stage might also be induced to provide consultation at later stages. A school board member you interview may become an advocate for the project -- an important ally when you seek policy change.

-- while you are shaping the study --

All this and more can happen while you are still warming up and shaping the study. New people are brought in. Your group learns to work together. You develop a resource bank. Nonetheless, plans are still flexible and open to change during the exploratory stage.

New people who are asked for help can also be asked for ideas. In short, while you're shaping the study, you can continue to shape your organization.

B. How To Build A Study Around Hypotheses

You've conducted your exploratory study. In that brief, informal activity, you collected and sifted new data and ideas. You have broken the researchable problem down into its most important components. Now you use those components as organizers. That means stating them in usable form; as hypotheses, sub-questions, or headings.

One way to state them is as hypotheses. A hypothesis is an informed guess about the answer to a researchable problem. The important components of a researchable problem can be stated as hypotheses to be tested (proven or disproven).

Let's take the overcrowding example in which the exploratory research uncovered a pattern of uneven overcrowding at an urban high school. The group wanted to know why overcrowding was more severe in some areas than others. They could have answered that question by testing hypotheses like the following:

+Overcrowding is most severe among non-college bound classes because attitudes in this school and community favor the college-bound student.

+Overcrowding is not a problem in foreign language classes because teachers in language were given tenure despite declining enrollments.

+Overcrowding in the practical and fine arts areas is so severe that we need an addition to the building.

+Overcrowding could be alleviated through the introduction of extended school hours and open campus.

In other words, by testing hypotheses you can discover relationships, the extent of relationships, the causes of problems, and possible solutions. Instead of asking a set of subquestions you state likely answers. Then you design a research tool to see if those answers are true.

Another example may be helpful. Suppose your central issue is political apathy. Your researchable problem is "Why do so few people in the community belong to the two existing citizen groups?" With that problem, any of the following might be likely answers, or hypotheses:

-Because the organizations meet at inconvenient times.
-Because people in our community feel inadequate.
-Because people in our community are satisfied. They don't see any need for change.
-Because most people in our community work at jobs out of town. Our town is only a bedroom for them.
-Because the local government discourages citizen participation. The groups aren't effective.

The list of tentative answers is long, even when you've shortened it by an exploratory study. You need to make some choices about which hypotheses are most pertinent. Then build around them. Suppose that participation is low simply because the organizations meet at inconvenient times. If you thought that this point was trivial, the key to improving membership would be missed. The need to conduct an exploratory study before building hypotheses, as you see, is obvious.

-- criteria for hypotheses --

1. A hypothesis is a tentative answer to part of a researchable problem, set forth to guide the investigation of the problem. Hypotheses are written as statements -- often in "if...then" format.

2. A hypothesis may frequently express a relationship between variables, or ideas that you are trying to measure. (A variable is an idea, concept, thing, or event which can be measured.) For instance, overcrowding is a variable, as are attitudes toward college bound students. Membership in citizen organizations is a variable, as is the time of meetings.

3. Hypotheses should reflect your priorities about a problem. They should order your inquiry by focusing clearly on information you want.. Dont' construct hypotheses that test ideas of minimal importance. Develop hypotheses that generate the most powerful set of facts possible.

4. Hypotheses in action-research focus on getting information which is available, not out of reach.

5. Hypotheses should point to causes, relationships, and solutions about which something can be done. There's little use in proving that problem "X" exists because there are so many old people in your community. For the academic researcher, that would be fine. For the action-researcher, however, it's a waste of time. For what can s/he do about the fact that there are so many old people? The action researcher wants to know how the problem can be solved!

6. At least one hypothesis should be directly aimed at finding feasible solutions to the problem that concerns you.

7. Hypotheses should flow from exploratory studies or other forms of pilot testing. Don't use hypotheses extensively until you have reason to believe that they are important parts of the researchable problem. Check them out, even if it's just through a handful of interviews or observations.

AID 10 will assist you in developing hypotheses.

The hypothesis is a valuable tool for organizing a researchable problem. But it is not the only one. Some groups may prefer not to speculate about the "answers" in advance. Others may be put off by the term "hypothesis" itself. In other cases, group

leaders may think that developing hypotheses is too time consuming. In cases like these, your research can be effectively organized around subquestions or general headings.

C. How to Organize a Study Around Subquestions or General Headings

Subquestions or headings organize the research, but they do not suggest "likely answers." In other ways, however, they function much like hypotheses. They suggest relationships. They reflect your prime interests within the researchable problem. They focus on accessible information and realistic solutions. They flow from exploratory studies and demand pilot testing if wasted time is to be avoided.

Like the hypothesis-testing approach, organizing around subquestions or headings demands that you choose areas within the researchable problem that are most crucial. One way to do this, is by brainstorming. Frequently, however, just letting your concerns surface in a discussion is sufficient. Soon you'll find that a few clusters stand out. Those are your subquestions or headings.

Wareham parents working on the SHARE survey brainstormed on two occasions. But the core of their activity was just talking about the problem that concerned them and getting ready to survey community opinion on it. As they began to write a questionnaire, several major headings were culled from their notes:

-Personal information
-Knowledge about the school system
-Satisfaction with the schools
-Participation in civic and school affairs
-Communication with the school system
-Knowledge and attitudes about SHARE.

In Brockton, the seniors who evaluated a sample of high school courses broke their survey down as follows:

-Identification
-General Questions -- goals/grading
subject matter/teaching
classroom atmosphere
recommendation of the course to other students
teacher-added questions

-Guidance
-Physical Education
-Departmental Questions.

Questions could be generated just as easily as general headings. Questions, like hypotheses, have the added advantage of forcing you to focus your thinking more precisely than headings do. Let's take the SHARE survey. They might have used subquestions like the following as an alternative to headings.

-Do people have adequate knowledge about the school system?
-To what degree are people in Wareham satisfied with the schools here?
-How many people frequently participate in civic and educational affairs? Are people likely to want to participate in educational decisions? Under what conditions?
-Do citizens feel comfortable communicating with the school system?
-What do people know about SHARE? What do they think SHARE should be doing?

To come full circle, they might have used the hypothesis-testing approach in order to get a similar set of facts. (SHARE did not do so because it felt uncomfortable suggesting the answers in advance.) Had they done so, their hypotheses might have looked something like these:

-People currently have little knowledge about the schools, which is a factor in low participation.
-People don't participate actively in the schools because many of them are satisfied.
-People who participate in educational and civic affairs will become involved in educational decision-making if given the chance.
-Citizens do not feel sufficiently comfortable to communicate with the school system.
-Citizens need more information about SHARE.

As you can see, your group can use either subquestions, general headings, or hypotheses to attack your researchable problem. The choice is yours.

-- involvement again --

Generating a list of hypotheses, subquestions, or headings is another point for encouraging involvement. A brainstorming session or two for formulating every possible hypothesis can be fun and helpful. Brainstorming also taps a reservoir of intuitive knowledge about the community.

Once a long list is generated it's up to the project leaders to cull and combine hypotheses. Only a very small group or one person should take on this task. It is difficult for larger committees to do this kind of work. Once done, however, it should be reported back to the entire group for feedback or approval.

Another approach is to solicit questions from local organizations. One group organized a survey of community opinion on educational priorities in the following way: they wrote to members of every group, including the School Board, soliciting questions for their survey. They used this approach to build bridges with other civic and educational associations in their community.

As the questions came in, the group pulled them together under various headings. This process gave individuals and community groups a chance for thoughtful input into the questionnaire.

As material from various sources is sorted a particular strength of action-research becomes clear. With action-research, you can cast differing opinions about "the facts" as alternate hypotheses to be tested or subquestions to be asked. All points of view can be honored, and people with varying opinions can be induced to work together.

At this point, be sure not to mistake differences over facts with deep-rooted differences of values. Very few processes seem to change attitudes significantly. Action-research can change opinions over the facts by engaging people in their own re-education. It cannot, however, change attitudes and values immediately.

D. How to Develop Indicators

Next, you move from concepts and ideas to real-world indicators. A concept is an idea, a phenomenon, or a general understanding (e.g. participation in politics). An indicator is identifiable evidence of a concept (e.g. registration in a political party, membership in a political club or party organization, individual or group voting histories, contribution to campaign funds, candidacy for office). In other words, a person indicates participation in politics by voting consistently, running for office, belonging to a party organization, contributing money, and/or taking part in other forms of political action. In order to measure participation, we need these specific indicators of it.

Your problem is to decide what indicators provide evidence about the concepts in your researchable problem. Ask yourself, "What would constitute evidence -- knowledge, attitudes, opinions, behaviors, social characteristics, group or community processes, etc. -- about our topic?" Then write those indicators into your research tools such as questionnaires.

Let's say that your group is trying to find out whether or not the local school board is really accountable to your community. You decide that one concept closely related to accountability is the level of public knowledge about the board. Public knowledge becomes a general heading under your researchable problem of accountability.

Now you must measure public knowledge (the information that the public has about the board). To do so, you decide that five indicators will measure public knowledge or information:

1. Public attendance at school board meetings;
2. Public ability to name board members;
3. Public ability to identify issues faced by the board in the past year;
4. Public ability to identify the role of the board;
5. Contacts and communication between citizens and the board.

Based on those five indicators, you can devise questions for a survey that measure public knowledge about the board. By following a similar process for other components of accountability, you can devise a whole questionnaire.

Let's take a more difficult example. Suppose that your researchable problem is, "Does our public school system provide equal educational opportunity for all students?" First you'll need to decide what groups of students to compare: should you cluster students according to race, sex, age, socio-economic background, IQ, achievement scores, tracks, levels, or other categories? Once you classify students, you can research the question of whether or not they are being treated equally.

Now decide: what does "equally" measure? And what indicates "equally?" Do you want to measure equally in terms of disciplinary treatment, resources allocated per student, class size, teaching quality, extracurricular opportunities, special programs offered, or what? In this example, just moving from the researchable problem to the hypotheses, sub questions, or general headings requires that you choose among indicators like the above.

Suppose that you decide to compare students of different socio-economic characteristics, IQ scores, and records of achievement. You decide that the most important measures of equality are teaching quality, resources allocated per student, and special programs offered. Now you must go one step further in developing indicators: you must decide what indicates teaching quality, resource allocation, and special programs offered. Teaching quality may be difficult to measure, the latter two quite simple. But before you design your research instrument, you must decide what indicates each. Then you can find out whether or not your "public school system provides equal educational opportunity for all students."

-- develop indicators through exploration --

One excellent way to choose indicators is through an exploratory study. Field research in which you deal with your issue first-hand is particularly valuable. For instance, say you are investigating the quality of teaching and have decided that student boredom is an indicator of low quality teaching. What indicates boredom? A few days in class will undoubtedly arm you with many graphic examples?

-students looking out the windows constantly or falling asleep in class;
-students' comments that verbally express

boredom;
-Students chattering during the lesson;
-Students preparing to leave class before the bell.

Now develop "observer's checklists" and student surveys that include these indicators. By letting indicators come out of actual experience with a situation, you add validity to the information you collect.

Field research is not the only way to choose indicators. Background reading and depth-interviews with reliable witnesses and experts can also insure that your indicators are relevant. In summary, decisions about indicators are very important. It's difficult to imagine a productive project that skips the step of deciding what indicates what you want to know.

AID 11 is a short exercise in moving from concept to indicator.

E. Where to Look for Information: Three Settings

Once you choose your indicators, decide where to look for information. This consideration is far too frequently forgotten. Answers to education questions are not only found in schools. They are also found in the community and beyond.

After reading the next few pages you may either want to throw in the towel or take on the world. Resist both temptations. Focusing on a specific issue, and at the same time placing it in context, is not as hard as you may think. The key is knowing where to look for information.

The three "settings" in which you find educational information are decidedly different, yet they frequently interact. By considering each as you investigate, you can balance your need for focus with a general perspective on the problem. If you've followed the basic steps so far, you'll develop peripheral vision about your issue and maintain focus on what concerns you most.

You may be asking, "Why should we even consider anything but the immediate problem? Especially if we might be led astray from our central, motivating interest by doing so?"

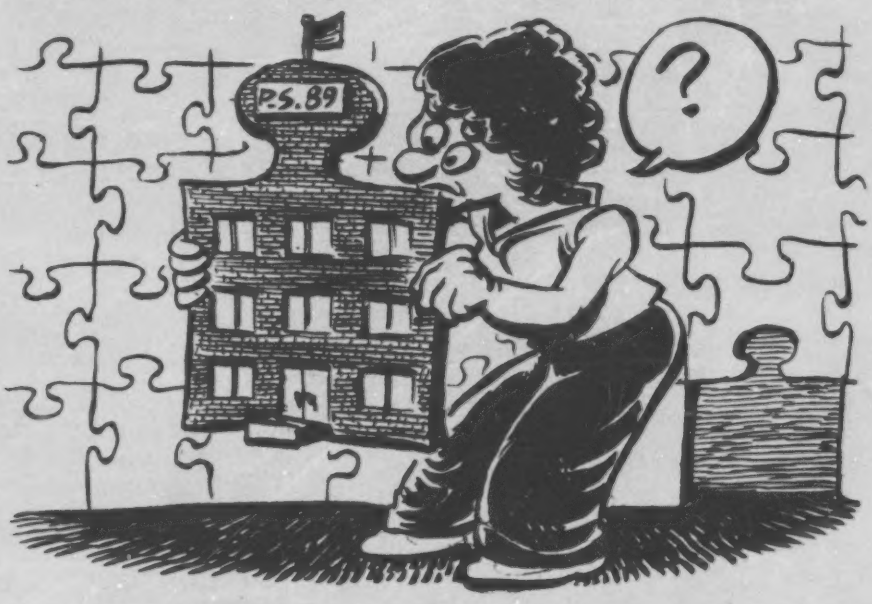
The answer is that the broad view balances your local concern. It stops you from developing "tunnel vision." It is more systematic. It leads you to new questions, new facts, and alternative solutions to your problem.

-- three "locations" of information --

The immediate institutions (the school and the school system), the local community, and the outside (e.g.state and national) environment are the prime settings in which you can find data. (see AIDS 12 and 13).

-- institutions --

In dealing with school problems, the immediate institution includes the classrooms, other parts of the school building, and the whole school system. This institution is a system of interconnected parts.



Change in one will be felt in others. The institution includes all the programs, personnel, and policies; everything from the departmental structure to athletic programs, grading practices, classroom teachers, administrators, guidance services, scheduling, tracking and leveling systems, school/community relations, student government, and other elements of the school

system.

-- communities --

The local community is also an excellent source of information about researchable problems in education. Community attitudes, for instance, may be the underlying reason that the women's athletic program lags behind the men's, or behind those in surrounding school districts.

Low achieving and vocationally oriented students, to use another example, may be getting shortchanged in a town that is seventy to eighty per cent college-bound. Why is it that middle class suburban schools frequently provide less than adequate industrial arts programs? The answers to these questions are in the community as well as in the schools.

Similarly, when community school activities are poorly attended, it may be a reflection of a community phenomenon. In Worcester, Massachusetts, the Woodland Street Community School Council took on an action-research project to find the causes for declining enrollment in adult programs.

From the beginning, they saw the community as an integral part of the problem and solution, even though the activities were based in the school. The Woodland School Council developed a questionnaire and administered it at a series of "block coffees." These meetings were designed to diagnose the problem and bring the people of this low income, highly mobile neighborhood together for planning activities.

Too often, educational problems have been attacked as strictly school problems. Schools have tinkered with programs. Frequently nothing happened. By looking to the community, however, successful program changes responsive to community trends and needs can be designed and implemented with local participation and support.

It's obvious that local cultural and environmental factors influence education. The neighborhood, home, peer group, community traditions, and other non-school factors bear heavily on education. Local attitudes and values, government structures, socio-economic levels, cultural groupings, family structures, job opportunities, and other community characteristics

all affect education. It doesn't make sense to overlook or ignore them as you look into your school system.

-- beyond the community --

Finally, your researchable problem may require you to look at factors beyond the community. These factors originate away from the local scene, but have important implications for your community. Federal and state court decisions and legislative changes, for instance, may have substantial impact in your school system. Desegregation, school prayer, school finance, and special education are just a few areas in which legal change has had major local effects.

Changes in teacher training programs and certification requirements influence the schools. The results of social science research, population trends, economic conditions, and regional, national and even world events find their way into local classrooms. It is difficult for a local group to deal with the effects of widespread problems. However, if you fail to consider the state and national setting, you may overlook some of the underlying causes of your problem. If you don't identify these causes, your action plans may be headed in the wrong direction.

-- looking for problem solving ideas --

One important reason to look beyond your community is to get problem-solving ideas. Investigating teacher training programs, in-service education, and certification requirements, for instance, will help a citizen group make informed recommendations about the quality of teaching in local schools. Similarly, strategies that seek to enforce equal opportunity in education or other constitutional/legal guarantees are developed only after an in-depth look at existing court decisions.

Bilingual education programs, storefront learning centers, adult programs, elderly and low-income services, and new public health activities are examples of projects for which models may be found outside the local community. Many such programs need outside technical or funding assistance to get underway. Many others can be initiated with local

initiative and funding.

Beyond the bounds of your community lies a wealth of information about your problem and about the resources you'll need to attack the problem.

STAGE III: USING ACTION-RESEARCH TECHNIQUES: FOUR APPROACHES TO FACT-FINDING

In Stage III, you actually construct your research tool, or instrument. You'll need to review the range offact-finding methods presented in the following pages. Field techniques, interview guides, observations, surveys, and document searches are examples of the tools you may employ.

Reviewing and selecting from possible methodologies is a process which often requires expert assistance. You might consider inviting a resource person with a knowledge of applied research to join your discussions of methods, or at least to review your final choice of research techniques.

The four methods most applicable to action-research are:

1. Participant-observation field techniques
2. Depth interviews
3. Document Research
4. Surveys

Basic information about each of these methods is presented here. More detailed explanations of each are available in the following I.R.E. Action Research publications:

Collecting Evidence (Participation-Observation and Depth Interviewing)
You Can Look It Up (Using Educational Literature)
Facts and Figures (Surveys)

Each of these publications is specifically designed to meet the needs of citizen groups. They are written in non-technical language and concentrate on educational issues.

A. Participant-Observation

Participant observation (P-O) is at once the most natural and unnatural, the simplest and most difficult of research methods. We are participants every day -- in grocery lines, at work, in crowds and on buses.

Sometimes we even closely observe what happens around us. But learning to observe in a systematic and reliable way, and to observe the right things, takes practice and skill.

-- what you see is what you get --

Suppose you are interested in citizen participation in education in your community. Data could be obtained quickly by sending two-person teams to observe the meetings of Title I Councils, PTO's or PTA's, Parent Advisory Councils, citizen organizations, and the School Board.

But observe what? The possibilities may seem endless. One could count the total number of participants, the make-up of the audiences, pre-and post-meeting interaction, the style and contents of various discussions, the proportion of men, young people, women, nonwhites, etc., in attendance.

One way to decide what is important is to record everything that happens. Later you can cull field notes for data on participation. Over time, the data itself will lead you to what is important. This is an exploratory, open-ended approach to gathering information.

-- checklisting --

Another possibility is to meet in advance, decide what to look for, and then build checklists for each observer. But be sure to leave space for recording direct quotations and observer's comments. The checklisting technique is often used by groups monitoring certain situations, such as the progress of school desegregation in Boston and Denver.

Checklists work most effectively if constructed after a couple of "dry runs" to make sure nothing important has been overlooked. Even when checklists are used, observers need practice. In training court-mandated monitors for Boston school desegregation, I.R.E. found that without practice or training, observers are unlikely to recognize the distinction between specific facts and general impressions.

-- a variety of field techniques --

The participant-observer uses a variety of field techniques including careful watching and listening, checking potentially relevant documents, and using unobtrusive measures (traces and wear spots). This style of research is useful because it is realistic. You are immersed in the situation. The methods are flexible. Working hypotheses and questions can be shaped, discarded, reshaped, or developed as necessary. Naturally, these qualities make P-O methods particularly valuable in conducting exploratory, preliminary studies.

P-O is also of great value as a tool for gathering evidence about processes, the circumstances surrounding various events, or other observable conditions. P-O helps to answer questions such as:

How are things happening?
What is happening that we don't or can't usually measure?
Under what conditions are things happening?
Why are things happening the way they are?

In order to look at the value of these techniques, consider the idea that the quality of education is not only influenced by what is being taught, but also by how it is being taught. Some would argue, for instance, that a "hidden curriculum" operates in each school. This hidden curriculum, they would say, determines the ways in which schools most affect kids. The hidden curriculum of some schools might train the kids to be compliant, rigid, dull, and obedient. At other schools it might be helping kids become independent, self-disciplined, active and curious.

-- how do things happen? --

P-O is the key to discovering the hidden curriculum in your community's schools. You want to find out how things are happening. You want to feel the school's atmosphere. You want to measure things that aren't usually measured. Traditional measures of school success such as test scores and curricular options won't do it for you. But by watching, probing and living with the situation, concerned action-researchers can obtain unrecorded valuable information

about crucial questions like:

-What is the quality of student-teacher interaction?
-What is emphasized in disciplinary matters?
-Do teachers seem flexible or rigid?
-How do students behave in the halls, in the lavatories, in the cafeteria, in the classrooms?
-Are people smiling? alert? friendly?
-What's the graffiti in the washrooms say?

In just a few days you can begin to discover a lot about any school. They way to do it is by spending time there.

-If you want to measure teaching quality, it's more important to observe than to check test scores.
-If you want to see a school day through the eyes of a student, spend a few days in the student routine. Then interview or survey other students to make sure your experience was typical.
-If you want to study discipline and student/teacher conflict, look for it. Watch the halls, passing doors, lavatories, assistant principals' offices and other key "switchboards" of conflict. All the action isn't in class.
-If you want a profile of your community, use census data. But also spend time on the streets, in the shops, and with the people.

In short, any time you want to know how things happen, why, and under what circumstances, use P-O. We seldom use it alone, but your project may require no more than first-hand observation. On the other hand, you may want to use P-O as a prelude to something more extensive. To paint a complete picture of any situation, you may need more than one technique.

-- investigators gathering evidence --

A participant-observer is like an investigator gathering evidence. Like Columbo and Woodward and Bernstein, s/he amasses facts by:

-Carefully recording observations;
-Searching for clues;

-Following leads
-Interviewing key informants;
-Poring over relevant documents;
-Building theory from fact, not molding fact to fit predetermined ideas.

Facts rather than general impressions are the most useful observational data. The participant-observer strives to describe the costumes and settings accurately, record quotes verbatim, and detail individual and group behaviors thoroughly. Prejudgment is scorned; judgment flows from the facts. The goal for the participant observer is to construct an accurate, plausible explanation, to build a persuasive case.

You may be part of a student group which wants to evaluate the courses at your school. Or a group of parents concerned about the hidden curriculum. Or a department chairperson interested in better methods of staff development. Or any other group interested in education. In almost every case, P-O can be a powerful fact-finding tool. But it takes practice. AID 14 provides practice exercises.

-- the access problem --

Getting access to information can be a serious problem for action-researchers. The problem is especially acute if you want to use P-O. You may find that the only way to do field research at a school is to "get in" through the eyes of student observers or cooperative teachers. Unfortunately, many school administrators are reluctant to open the doors to outside observers, especially parents and/or evaluators.

The alternative is to demand access by "standing up for your rights." But access based on demand can lead to a climate of mistrust and/or hostility. Collaborative efforts at reform with school officials may be impossible as a result of bad feeling. You'll be on the lookout for "negative facts." School officials will be defensive and protective. Meshing hostility and objectivity is an almost impossible task. The only way to avoid this problem is to counteract it before it begins.

Invite school officials into your research process from the start unless you are sure they will obstruct it. By inviting them to share in the research you can

develop more trusting relationships with school officials. Make no mistake about it, you may have to move more slowly when you're working through official channels.

On the other hand, the collaborative approach can involve the people who open doors. In the long run you get things done more quickly and thoroughly than you could on your own. You also build support for change among those who must implement it.

Action-research provides a built-in structure for shared problem-solving that can help overcome the access problem. Many school officials will be anxious to work in a structured, cooperative fashion with citizen groups. If action-research were based on confrontation, aiming for shared problem solving would be pointless. But in the late 1970's, when collaboration and citizen input in school decision making is so badly needed, the collaborative approach is on target. Aim for it from the outset. Officials may open the doors, if they can be convinced you don't want to break the doors down.*

B. Depth Interviewing

Depth interviewing is a field technique that falls under the participant-observation umbrella. Depth interviewing can be used with P-O, as a complement to surveys, or alone. Because it is so useful for action-researchers, it deserves special mention here, and is given special attention in Collecting Evidence.

We know of one group in Maryland that used depth-interviewing to great advantage. They interviewed two hundred community leaders about local problems and potential solutions. At the close of each interview, they asked the respondent for names of others they felt should be interviewed. (This is called a "snowball" sample.) Soon the respondents became committed to helping the interviewers. The interviews and the report that followed resulted in the creation of a small foundation to fund local attempts to solve local problems.

*One good source of strategy, material, resources and information on collaboration among school people and community people is TOGETHER: SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES, by I.R.E. Associate Director Miriam Clasby.

Depth interviewing need not be used alone. It is frequently a prelude or follow-up to surveys. Depth interviews do not allow action-researchers to cover the broad range of topics and respondents that surveys can. But they do encourage probing and discovering new channels for further investigation. When you're dealing with subtle and tricky topics such as school discipline or educational values, depth interviews may be an essential preliminary to a good survey.

The depth interviewer knows in advance what s/he wishes to cover during a thirty-minute or two-hour conversation. The best approach is to have prearranged but flexible questions. Then compare responses from several respondents. The strength of this approach is in the researcher's ability to discover and explore matters s/he had not even considered in advance. So the interviewer must remain flexible.

-- using informants --

Some people have access to information that is otherwise unobtainable. Others have special skills and knowledge about particular situations. The best informants are "insiders" who know things that are not public, and who are willing to "leak" information.

Reliable informants often have either broad access to total situations or specialized access in one area. Custodians, for instance, generally have a

picture of what is happening in a school. They have contact with the students, teachers and administrators. Secretaries, bookkeepers, and committee vice-presidents have access to knowledge about specific areas.

"Experts," "decision makers," and "leaders" are usually poor informants. Too often they have a narrow, biased, or defensive point of view.

Look for the "switchboard:" someone who is at a key point in the flow of communication but without any axe to grind.

-- probing --

Finding out what happened at the secret meeting or executive session, or what's inside "the books" is not easy. The behind-the-scenes facts of the matter emerge only after careful probing. Informants may be reluctant to tell too much or to reveal "hard facts," until you've built an atmosphere of trust.

Working with informants can be frustrating and painstakingly slow, but the potential payoff is high.

-Be patient.
-Question carefully.
-Don't ask too much too soon.

Some journalists use this technique very well. In All the President's Men, Watergate investigators Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward provide many vivid examples of the delicate, persistent probing that is required with reluctant informants. In Facts and Figures, you'll find a guide for training interviewers with a special section on probing. See AID 15 for a synopsis of that section.

Depth interviewing is not always as exciting as it was for Woodward and Bernstein, or as it is for Colombo and other TV detectives. It requires perseverance, imagination, flexibility, sensitivity to hints and clues, and willingness to ask tough questions. It is among the most productive and efficient action-research methods.

C. Using Documents

Books, articles, court decrees, public and semi-public documents and other written information can be

valuable. These are especially good sources of background information, informed opinion, and problem-solving ideas. Many people may have done prior research on your researchable problem. Finding the research that has already been done will prevent you from reinventing the wheel.

-- prescreening --

A wealth of information is available on almost any educational question. In fact, you'll probably have to select out a manageable amount from an abundance of literature. It is important to prescreen literature by asking for suggestions from well-read resource people. Librarians, advocacy planners, university professors, graduate students, community workers, and school professionals may be helpful. Spending an hour or so with someone who knows the literature will help you zero in on the most important material.

Find out what's available in local libraries. University libraries usually have the best collections of literature on education. They are more extensive than all but the largest public libraries. On the other hand, public libraries may have local news, picture files, or subject files that can't be found at the university. It's worth your while to develop a road map to relevant readings.

Don't use libraries exclusively. Find out what bookstores stock up-to-date material on your subject. Check to see where public documents are located, and how to get access to them. Look for films, slides, recordings, and other audio-visual materials. Libraries may be the most extensive source of information, but there are other possibilities too.

-- where you can look it up --

The following list highlights the array of written sources on education. These are explained more fully in <u>You Can Look It Up</u>.

-<u>Current books and periodicals</u> provide information on many topics in education. Large libraries and university collections have the most material on education. Another excellent source is the "professional

library" maintained by most local school systems. You'll also want to check bookstores for current paperbacks.

-An index tells you where to find books, articles, and reports. The Education Index, the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, and the New York Times Index will be especially helpful.

-Periodicals are the best sources of current studies, facts, statistics, and professional opinion. Monthlies like Phi Delta Kappan and Clearinghouse are useful for professional and lay readers alike. Trade journals such as those published by principals' and teachers' associations will also be useful for school/community projects. Citizen Action in Education, the I.R.E. journal, is particuarly helpful to groups interested in improving school/community relations.

-Bibliographies list books. Some are general, such as Books in Print, which is available at almost any library or bookstore. Others are specific, such as Don Davies' Citizen Participation in Education: An Annotated Bibliography. Annotated bibliographies have a capsule description and/or critique of each listing.

-ERIC(Educational Resources Information Center) is a nationwide information network. It is designed to acquire, abstract, index, store, retrieve, and distribute the most significant and timely education-related reports. The basic ERIC reference tools are an annotated monthly publication (Resources in Education) and a computerized information retrieval system. For about $15, ERIC will conduct a computer search for titles that relate to your researchable problem. ERIC is an extremely valuable resource available at most city, university, and state college libraries.

-Newspapers are a rich source of information about local issues and problems. They have current files on news events. They help sort out the personalities, issues, backgrounds, and decisions that relate to local news events and developments.

-Government documents and reports are excellent background material. The U.S. Census report on your area will help you answer socio-economic and other population-related questions. Your town or city

report, and those of various other local agencies, can also assist you. Federal and State government offices (e.g. US Office of Education, State Department of Education) publish and list reports that may be related to your researchable problem.

-Public and quasi-public records include valuable facts. Annual reports and financial statements, legislative documents, court transcripts and decrees, minutes of meetings and hearings, city and county codes, and charters and bylaws are several sources of facts you may need. The list is long. The trick is to become familiar with agencies and people whose business it is to know what's available. By working with them you'll develop your own mental inventory. Common examples of records you should learn about include policy statements, student handbooks, job descriptions, reports of state and regional accreditation agencies, and minutes of school board meetings.

-- advantages of document research --

Using documentary evidence doesn't create opportunities for face-to-face interaction with the public. However, it has several important advantages for action-researchers.

-It is efficient.
-It is the most effective, thorough way to find out how others have looked at your problem and what solutions have been proposed.
-It is nonthreatening to the researcher. People who would prefer not to conduct an interview or do first hand field research may not mind spending a few hours in the library.
-It is valuable for finding background information and ideas for change.
-It is the only way to investigate rules, budgets and other records of "what the system says it is doing."
-It is, therefore, a useful way to check on public officials and - if necessary - to prove official misconduct.
-It is one way to increase your organization's familiarity with its area of interest. You'll develop a "mental file" of resources about your topic.

The following example demonstrates how using documents helps build community skills and teamwork.

I.R.E. worked with an inner city neighborhood organization in Boston that recently solved a "flooding problem." Basements of local homes had mysteriously flooded, causing substantial inconvenience and property damage to poor and working class residents. Nobody was willing to take responsibility for the flooding. And nobody in the area knew the cause.

The organization's community organizers developed a group of thirty residents to investigate the problem. They pored over underground maps and engineering reports in city offices and public works agencies. It was a demanding and time consuming process, but it worked.

These action-reseachers found evidence which (they believe) demonstrated an underground stream was re-routed unintentionally during a public construction project. Because this informal action-research group dug up this evidence, residents are now negotiating a settlement with government agencies.

They also undertook a subsequent project -- monitoring the quality of food at local markets - in cooperation with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division.

-- make documents work for you --

There are countless ways in which you can make documents work for you.

-Student handbooks and pamphlets explaining student rights can help avoid unwarranted suspensions.

-Engineering reports and environmental impact statements can help modify or halt questionable development.

-Articles, books and studies can give you the knowledge you need to share decision-making with school officials and gain "professional respect" for your group.

-Your own studies can prove that you are a serious, persistent, and knowledgeable interest group.

Start by talking to the experts with the reference tools listed in this section. Judicious use of the literature and public reports can add tremendously to your action-research project.

D. Surveys

Of all research methods, most people are most familiar with surveys. Surveys employ questionnaires administered by mail or interviews conducted by the action-research group. Interview surveys can maximize human contact and interaction around an issue that can create an atmosphere conducive to change. Widespread participation and advocacy for change can be blended into a citizens' survey.

-- the Gloucester City elderly project --

In Gloucester City, New Jersey, senior citizens surveyed the needs of the elderly. Led by a volunteer committee and assisted by the local school department, they recruited and trained interviewers, prepared questionnaires, conducted the interviews and analyzed the facts. The survey reached over half of the city's 2,000 elderly residents. That sample is far larger than necessary in most cities or towns. (A sample is a segment of any population taken to represent the whole population. See AID 16 for appropriate sample sizes for community surveys.)

In Gloucester City, "The job to be done was to find the problems, if any, and present them before those who have power."* According to local officials, the survey increased local awareness of elderly problems and concerns. It stimulated face-to-face discussion among the elderly themselves about the issues. It drew the attention of local and Philadelphia newspapers, and of local public officials. Citizens from other parts of the country have inquired about the project.

The project provided an important example for other groups who want to use surveys seriously. First, the local schools and the elderly procured a small grant from the State of New Jersey. Then the local elderly, assisted by the Adult Continuing Education Center of Montclair State College, developed the instrument itself. The school system and the local Masons provided meeting space and other resources.

The project proved that concerned citizens can attract the support from the "outside" to help them tackle tough problems.

-- a survey is a way to --

Surveys are the best ways to gather data from a population sample, such as randomly selected students in a school or voters in a community. By compiling the responses to the questions in a survey, you can get useful information about:

*R. Kennett Gieseke, "Gloucester City Aging Project Survey," unpublished.

-Attitudes and opinions;
-Levels of public knowledge;
-Social and economic characteristics such as income, education levels, ethnic background;
-Stated behavior (what people say they are doing, or have done in the past, or plan to do in the future;
-Relationships between various phenomena, called variables in the language of researchers. (A variable is a factor, event, thing, or phenomenon that can be measured. "Age of teachers" is a variable, for instance, as is "ability to relate to students." Each can be measured in a survey; as can the relationship between them.)

If one research goal is to describe phenomena, another is to explain why a particular phenomenon is true, or how it relates to others. Is support for school integration related to socio-economic status? Are people satisfied with the local schools because they don't know about other school systems? Is the level of public knowledge about the school system low because the local paper doesn't cover school affairs, or because the school system discourages parent contacts? Will people participate in certain types of parents' groups, but not in others?

A third goal is comparison: How does support for integration vary from one part of the district to the next? Are older people more satisfied with the schools than the students? Than recent graduates? Is the level of knowledge about the schools lower than the national level? Does participation by parents lag behind that of surrounding communities?

-- "resting" relationships --

Measuring or "testing" relationships between variables is the most difficult form of surveying you are likely to try. Relationships that are suggested in exploratory studies or formulated in your mind should be tested, however. One good way to do so is to state the variables in hypotheses. If we believe that "age of teachers" and "popularity with students" are related, we can state the hypothesis that "young teachers are the most popular with their students." (Everyone in the group need not accept that as a conclusion -- it's not a conclusion. It is a hypothesis to be

supported or disproved by the facts gathered and tabulated in your survey.) After defining "young" and developing indicators for "popular," you can build questions to support or reject the hypothesis.

To use another example, say that your researchable problem deals with improving the level of citizen participation in school affairs. Your exploratory study leads you to believe that the highest participation is found among people with the greatest number of years of education. If the survey is to be a guide for future action, you might test some hypotheses about maximizing the high potential involvement among the well-educated. Similarly, you could test the relationships between less-well educated people and various methods to involve them. Possible hypotheses include:

-We can involve more well-educated people by asking those already involved to recruit their friends.

-Less-educated people will become involved on a wider scale if we can identify the issues that concern them.

-Issues don't really matter; people will become involved in projects and organizations if we can get their friends involved.

-Less educated people aren't involved because local parents' organizations project an upper-middle class image.

-Less educated people aren't involved because they are satisfied with the schools.

-- Why is the student council ineffective? --

More than one hypothesis and set of questions can be built into a survey. Say you're a student group interested in discovering why your school's student council is ineffective. After brainstorming and discussion, you arrive at the following hypotheses to organize a survey.

The student council is ineffective because:

-student body expectations of council members

are low.
-the council has a poor image of itself.
-the council has no clear responsibilites.
-the council is composed of an unrepresentative, elite group.
-the administration's attitude is restrictive.

After defining terms like "low expectations," "poor image," "clear responsibilities," "elite," "restrictive administrative attitude," and "ineffective," write questions to test each hypothesis. (More on writing questions later.)

Suppose you discover that poor performance ("ineffectiveness") is less closely tied to student body expectations and administrative attitudes than to factors of the council itself. You now have a good idea of where to direct change efforts.

You might try to improve council effectiveness by tactics such as:

-Providing leadership training for council members;
-Engaging the council in a series of "do-able" projects designed to build esteem;
-Clarifying the role of council members through orientation sessions and in-service training;
-Seeking changes in the ways council members are elected to insure more equal representation;
-Urging members of "non-elite" groups to run for the council, and helping them with their campaigns.

Survey research is a great tool for action-researchers. But survey projects are time consuming and must be undertaken with great care. Three of the most important points in a survey are selecting the sample, building the questionnaire, and deciding how to administer it.

-- selecting the sample --

One of the first steps in survey research is to define the population you want to learn about. Is it all citizens in the community? All property taxpayers? All parents? All high school seniors? All people over 65? All parents of elementary school students?

Typically, that population is too large to survey completely. Interviewing every member of it would be too time-consuming and complex. Data analysis would be an impossible and endless task. Fortunately, you can draw a sample of the population. Properly done, a random sample yields excellent results. (Random selection means that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen for the sample...In other words it means chance selection.) See AID 16 for how to choose the sample size. Facts and Figures, I.R.E.'s Action-Research publication on surveys has a detailed, yet nontechnical, explanation of various types of sampling.

The easiest way to draw a sample which adequately represents the larger population is from a complete list of that population (a list of all teachers, all parents, all students, etc.) To some extent, the question of what population to study is answered by the question, "What lists are available?" One could obtain accurate lists of all teachers, students, or parents from the schools. You could obtain accurate lists of all property taxpayers from the tax rolls, of all attorneys from the phone book.

But some lists are harder to come by. Say you're looking for a list of all people over 65, or under 25, in your town. In some locales, the street listings include ages of the residents. In others they do not. It may be difficult to get a population list, much less to take a sample.

Furthermore, be aware of bias in lists. It may look like a telephone book comprises a total listing of community residents. In fact, it excludes those who cannot afford phones. Voter lists include only those who register to vote, not all parents or taxpayers.

Street listings are usually the best list of local residents, but in our Wareham field test they comprised a list that was too extensive. Confusing? Read on.

-- a difficult sampling problem --

Wareham, Massachusetts is the gateway to Cape Cod. The population swells in the summer. For sampling only year-round residents, a street listing was too complete. The group determined that the phone

books included just about all residents -- summer and year round -- of the economically and ethnically diverse town. One group of Wareham numbers was listed not in the Wareham phone book, but in the phone book of neighboring Bourne.

Sound complicated? It was. The Wareham citizen group, SHARE, had to find a way to apply as much sampling theory as possible to these realities. It was not easy.

Although they were doing a telephone survey, they used the street listing as their "population list." They chose 800 names for the sample, even though they wanted only 400 respondents. Each interviewer was given twenty randomly selected names and asked to contact them by telephone, using the appropriate phone book. (Remember the town was divided into two exchanges.)

MR. SITTY SLICKER OF 28 BEACHVIEW LANE? ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR COMMITTEE TO COMBAT SLUGGISH SNOW REMOVAL?
NO, I SUPPOSE NOT—
?

Interviewers were instructed to contact every other name on their lists starting with the first name, then the third, etc. Then, after reaching the nineteenth they returned to the second, fourth, etc. It was anticipated that summer residents would not answer the phones since the survey was scheduled for winter. So if a call to a certain number was repeatedly not answered, it was omitted from the list.

By assigning twenty names to interviewers and giving them a procedure in which to get ten interviews, SHARE was able to deal with a difficult sampling problem emerging from the town's position as a Cape Cod resort area. By allowing for face-to-face interviews in the absence of phone numbers, they were able to deal with list bias due to income.

-- how to pick the sample --

Assuming that a reliable list is available, a random sample can be selected in the following way. Decide how large a sample you need. The more homogeneous your population, the smaller the sample. Divide the sample size into the total population. You will get a numerical answer "N." Then, starting with any number, choose every "Nth" name on the list. Those chosen become the recipients of the questionnaire.

Our other action-research field tests also provide examples of sampling grounded in the exigencies of particular situations. In the first, randomness (or chance selection) was used. Brockton High students, you will remember, did an evaluation of courses and teachers at their high school.

The students assigned numbers to every course (not every section) in the school, using the course catalogue as their list. The total number of courses was 460. The students then decided on a sample size of about 125: 100 to be drawn at random, 25 to be selected because they were popular, required, or heavily subscribed.

To get the 100 at random, one of the students programmed a computer to print out 100 random numbers between one and 460. Then they checked the computer-selected numbers against their numbered list of courses and took off their sample of courses. One section of each computer-selected course was chosen,

and every student in the section surveyed. Ideally, the sections would also have been chosen at random, but adequate lists were not available.

In another field test, this one involving a community school council in Worcester, randomness was not used in drawing the sample. In order to administer its survey, the council held a series of "block coffee hours." Everyone was notified; anyone could attend. Anyone who attended received the questionnaire and participated in discussing the issues after answering it. Since a major goal of the Worcester project was to bring together people with an interest in the community school's activities, randomness was not a prime consideration.

As you can see, action-researchers can face some difficult sampling problems. These are compounded by the fact that most citizens have limited time and no budget with which to overcome these problems. Get the best, most random sample possible within the bounds of practicality.

For more complete explanations of various types of sampling, consult Facts and Figures or a basic research or statistics book.

-- questionnaire construction --

Questionnaire construction should be approached with great care. Although most citizen groups are able to construct excellent questionnaires, this is an important step and certain rules should be followed. The questionnaire, of course, represents the action-researchers' best guesses about what factors are relevant to the researchable problem. If key factors are missed, there is no way to recoup after the survey is complete.

The questionnaire must be comprehensive - yet not so long that it discourages the respondent. In Wareham, hundreds of possible questions were brainstormed and then condensed into a list of thirty. Your group can be just as successful at synthesizing its concerns. Summarize your concerns. Then write the questions.

The following rules of questionnaire construction should be helpful:

First, the early questions should be the least difficult, threatening, and personal on the list. Ask very personal questions only after the respondent is feeling comfortable, well along in the survey. A respondent may be more willing to reveal the family income after s/he is "warmed up" to the survey.

Second, strive for clarity. Write, rewrite and edit all questions with an eye for confusing words, double meanings, and other sources of misunderstanding. If a question means different things to different people, then responses will be based on different perceptions. That question, then, is worthless.

Third, use closed-ended questions whenever possible. Closed-ended questions have fixed-alternative answers such as yes/no, ranking, rating scales, multiple choices, etc. Despite the fact that open-ended questions add richness to your survey, they are very difficult to categorize and tabulate.

A few open-ended questions bring a "human dimension" to the responses. But they are primarily for in-depth interview work with small samples. The larger the sample, the more pronounced the need for closed-ended questions.

Fourth, in constructing the answer choices for closed-ended questions, be sure that the categories are exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Suppose the question is, "How many years of schooling have you had?" The answers "a) 1-9 yrs. b) 10-12 yrs. c)13-16 yrs." are not exhaustive. The categories exclude all those with less than one year and more than sixteen. But the categories are mutually exclusive: no person can fit into more than one of them.

Finally, a questionnaire should guarantee the anonymity of the respondent. The obvious means of identification should be absent. And no questions so specific that they reveal the respondent's personal identity should be asked. Always assure the respondent in writing (and during the course of the interview) that no personal identification is being recorded.

More material on questionnaire construction is available in AIDS 17, 18, 19, including seven rules about question writing. Facts and Figures, a companion handbook on community surveys, presents a more detailed explanation of building questionnaires and

wording individual questions.

-- methods of conducting the survey --

The three most common ways to conduct a survey are:

1. Face-to-face interviews
2. Telephone interviews
3. Mail-out questionnaires

This section is designed to help you choose the method that best suits your needs.

In general, the mail-out questionnaire is least useful. It fails to stimulate face-to-face discussion. It doesn't require much volunteer assistance. So there are fewer opportunities for involvement. It usually yields a low rate of return.

Nonetheless, if your group is small or trying to reach a very large sample, the mail survey may be for you. If you can't expand your group or get enough volunteer interviewers, the mail survey's efficiency of distribution is a big advantage. Other advantages of the mail survey include anonymity and lack of bias due to the style of different interviewers.

Mail surveys invariably suffer from low response rates, so anything you can do to motivate the recipients to respond will be a plus. You should:

-Make the survey neat and attractive in format;
-Be sure to include a full statement about your group and its purposes;
-Publicize the fact that you are doing the survey;
-Enclose a cover letter;
-Send an advance notice to each member of the sample;
-Include a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

These techniques, especially the first two, are useful in face-to-face and telephone surveys too.

Be prepared to send cards or make calls to those who do not respond. As a rule of thumb, expect 10% to 20% of the sample to respond after the initial mailing. Another 10% to 30% may respond after one or two follow-up requests. So, although the mail-out is

easy to distribute, it is not particularly easy to retrieve.

One variation of the mail-out survey compensates for many of the weaknesses listed above. Deliver the surveys by hand, and explain the purpose and importance to each member of the sample. Ask respondents to complete the survey within a few days. Then remind them by telephone. A week or so later, pick the surveys up (or have them mailed back in a prestamped, self-addressed envelope.) This variation requires fewer volunteer surveyors, creates public contact, and improves your response rate.

In action-research the quality of action is as important as the quality of research. Thus, the one-to-one discussions, personal contacts, and wide range of volunteer opportunities provided by personal and telephone interviews fit best for action-research. They take longer to administer than the mail out. Face-to-face interviews take from fifteen minutes to over an hour; telephone interviews ten minutes to half an hour.

The phone interview omits those who do not have telephones (usually low-income people), from the sample. but it has positive qualities you shouldn't ignore. It generates personal contact. It is relatively flexible and quick. It does not require the interviewer to leave home. Advance appointments are usually not required. Many people seem to feel more comfortable being interviewed at a distance; and most interviewers would rather call than knock on doors. Several attempts can easily be made to contact each respondent.

E. Building Tools Is a Time for Involvement

Once you decide on the appropriate method, you can develop your own research instrument. This is another point in action-research where you have great opportunities to involve people. By involving people in building the instrument you can increase their commitment to the project and the issue. More important, you'll be giving them a sense of involvement and influence that is so missing in today's world.

-- a suggested process --

Assume that your group is about to construct a questionnaire and an observation schedule. You could invite people, both members of your group and potential volunteers, to a brainstorming session. Start the session by explaining the researchable problem, your particular "slant" on it -- including your hypotheses, subquestions, or general headings -- and the indicators you have selected. (Of course, if you've stimulated enough participation up to this point, many people at the meeting with be familiar with all this.)

Then explain that your purpose for this meeting is to generate specific questions for the questionnaire and a strategy for observations and other field research. The first step is a brainstorming session:-- half devoted to the observations, half devoted to the questionnaire. Once again, see AID 9 on brainstorming.

Next, break into small groups. Each group can draft initial versions of the research instruments. Or half the groups can work on the questionnaire and half on the observation itinerary. They might even take the work home for a couple of weeks, and report back to the whole group later. The task of each group is to select the most important ideas from the brainstorming, and incorporate them into a research tool.

Writing the final versions of the instrument is a task for a small group. Four or five people and a resource person would seem to be the maximum size for this job. (The resource person you use here should be the same one who will help with data analysis -- a task closely related to constructing the instrument.)

After your small group completes its work, you may wish to report back to all those who helped construct the instrument. You can hold a meeting to review the final version. Or mail it out and ask for written comments. I.R.E.'s experience in Worcester, Wareham, and Brockton indicates that a meeting is the best approach. It gives everyone a chance to review the instrument. They "own" it. They want to make it work. Thus, they are committed to giving more time and energy to the project.

-- much to be learned --

Whatever the instrument, there is much to be learned from producing it. Developing instruments is the point at which common concepts and words must be given final and precise clarification. As people debate what they mean by educationalequality, a good course, citizen involvement, open education, or back to basics, vital learnings can take place.

Developing people's abilities to cut through vague terms and think precisely gives a boost to future community action projects. Organizing productive group processes demonstrates to people that they are capable of working effectively together. Giving people a taste of influence on decisions will whet their appetite for input in the future.

Developing your own research tools will help your group to build inquiry skills. But more important, it demonstrates the ability of the public to investigate public issues and institutions.

I.R.E.'s experience shows that people have the skills to write questions and develop other action-research instruments. In New Haven, a group consisting of three housewives, three teachers, one cashier, one graduate student, one recent high school graduate, one tenant organizer, one day care worker, and one guidance counselor demonstrated that they could build a first-rate questionnaire.

In Gloucester City, elderly residents had little trouble designing an instrument to generate information about their own problems. Students in Brockton and New Hyde Park were similarly successful, as were parents in Worcester and Wareham. In each of these cases, technical assistance was helpful, but lay people showed that they knew what they wanted to ask and how to ask it.

-- a reminder about using resource people --

Action-research appeals to people who want to approach problems logically. In Wareham, an ex-sociology student with an interest in public opinion and political behavior found herself leading an action-research project. In Brockton, a high school student particularly adept at scientific thinking emerged as a leader. Even in these situations, however, the involvement of a resource person who could offer encouragement and technical help was useful.

Although the message may be getting repetitive, we once again urge you to enlist such aid. If you haven't done so by now, this is a step in which consulting with an "expert" will add to the quality of your work. Try to find someone who can supplement this handbook and help you to adapt or go beyond it.

The resource person is just that and not a leader. The resource person is there to be a checker, supporter, technical assistant, and answer person. Make it clear from the start that you have your own agenda. Find out what the resource person's is. (Within limits, you may be able to assist him/her at the same time you use his/her assistance.) Your work is not academic. You want more than information. Concern, support, involvement, planning for change, and other action-oriented outcomes are just as important as the facts themselves.

Explain these realities to the resource person. Also explain that you'll need periodic advice in areas

such as question writing, interviewer training, data analysis, and report writing. Tell the consultant that you'll need sustained interest and a willingness to see the project through, but that a heavy time commitment isn't necessary. Establish a verbal contract with your resource people.

-- a pilot test --

Instruments, especially surveys, should be pretested with a small group similar to the anticipated population under study. The procedure for pretesting a survey questionnaire or interview schedule is as follows: Select a small sample. Provide space on the questionnaire or interview schedule for reactions to the instrument. Administer the pretest under conditions comparable to what you plan. Check the responses. Analyze the results. Analyze the overall reaction. Make appropriate changes in the instrument.

-- summary --

Too often, the survey method is seen as the "one best way" to get the facts. In the preceding pages the survey is placed in context with three other valuable tools: observations, depth interviews, and document research. Each has its own particular functions and attributes, and each can be used effectively by action-researchers.

In action-research, the premium is on methods that involve people in getting the facts. Methods that will engage people in meeting other people are particularly useful. Remember too, that different tasks and therefore different methods will appeal to the wide range of personalities that will be a part of your project. Unless you provide tasks and activities that appeal to those personalities, your project will fall short of maximum success.

Finally, remember that developing research tools is a point for involving a wide range of communities and groups. In the City of New Haven and in the small town of Sharon, Massachusetts, for instance, representatives of many groups and constituencies were involved in building instruments. A study that includes contributions from the school department, elected

representatives, neighborhood people, business groups, and other important actors on the local scene is bound to have more credibility than one conceived in isolation.

For more information on particular methods, consult Facts and Figures, Collecting Evidence, You Can Look It Up -- all available from I.R.E. -- or talk to a resource person in your area.

STAGE IV: COLLECTING AND ANALYZING THE FACTS

Stage IV has been shaped by decisions already made. In this stage of action-research your organization gets the facts. Then facts are analyzed and conclusions drawn.

A. How to Collect the Facts

All through Stage I, II, and III you lined up volunteers for data gathering. Some agreed to give just a short time commitment -- perhaps an afternoon or an evening. Others agreed to work on a specific task. Still others have been with you all along.

At this point, you'll need volunteers for one purpose -- data gathering. Try to recruit about 25% more volunteers than you think you need. This allows for sickness, other "no-shows," and dropouts. If you're doing face-to-face interviews, or using the telephone, seek a volunteer core that represents a cross-section of the community. This not only generates new involvement among groups you may not know first-hand, but also balances out errors due to any bias which may be common to a particular group of interviewers.

Don't let a lack of participation at this point discourage you. And don't involve people who might obstruct your group, even if they are willing to

"help." There's still plenty of time to seek new recruits. By explaining how much you've done so far, and exactly the kind of help you need to complete your work, you can probably attract that help.

Another alternative is to scale down your project if you don't have the resources needed to follow through on your present plan. You can survey a smaller sample. Or use a mail-out questionnaire instead of one that requires large numbers of volunteer interviewers. Maybe you'll have to concentrate on documents and observations, or interviews with informants and experts, instead of doing a large, multi-method study. Perhaps all that's needed is an adjustment in your time-table. Check back to AID 6. Fill it out again. Do you have the resources to complete the job?

-- the human feel of involvement --

Stage IV presents many opportunities for people to become involved in a project with their neighbors and fellow citizens. Properly executed, it creates good feelings about participation. People begin to think that involvement in community projects is fun.

You might conduct a community survey by scheduling interviews for a Saturday morning. Then reassemble in the afternoon and discuss your experiences while eating a late lunch. For many participants, the day will have brought some new and even startling insights into the community. Your group will be anxious to discuss the interviews and talk about different respondents. Capitalize on that fact. Encourage discussions that bring out the human feel of a day in the community. As people talk about it, motivation is developed for other community projects.

During the course of the interviewing, you have three opportunities:

- -To collect data and make a case for support;
- -To meet new people;
- -To inform them of any additional concerns and objectives of your organization.

You might leave a postcard with the people you interview. Ask them to return it if they are interested in attending a meeting at which the results of fact-finding are discussed. Ask them to return the card if they'd be interested in receiving more information about your group, attending a meeting, or working on a project.

The post-card technique can help you build on the day's contacts. It's a good way to develop or increase a mailing list. It can be a vehicle to support change, or add to your corps of volunteers. According to one veteran of Washington-area action-researcher projects, "The post card technique is a dandy way of drawing together an audience which might be drawn into, or turned into, your constituency."

-- training volunteer data gatherers --

Training programs for action research rely on common sense. For instance, don't hassle data gatherers with unnecessary, specialized knowledge and theory. They need the tools to do a job. And in most cases, a general statement of purpose explaining why you are using the methods selected is sufficient. Be open to theoretical questions, but don't answer them with long involved treatises.

Limit your theoretical explanations to the application of theory to your specific project. Questions will usually focus not on theory, but on "where? what? when? and how?" This was I.R.E.'s experience in New Haven, Brockton, and other projects. Volunteers don't want a research course. They don't need one. Don't give them one.

As little as one or two hours of training may be enough. In a project in metropolitan Washington, D.C., training and data collection took place on the same day. There's nothing to say that your group can't train people in the morning, give them some lunch, and send them out to get the facts that very day.

On the other hand, up to eight to ten hours of training may be needed, as it was in New Haven. The complexity of your methods and the experience of your interviewers determine the length of training required.

Training procedures should be stimulating and interesting. (Both Facts and Figures and Collecting Evidence detail training methods you may wish to apply to your situation.) AID 20 is designed to help you to construct your own "Lesson Plan." Training should add to a "community project," "we're doing this together" spirit. Don't train people just by talking to them. Get them involved in an active learning process as you train them.

One way to do this is to break into small groups. Each will focus on the particular research tasks its members undertake. Use groups of ten each led by a trainer who will supervise the group throughout the data gathering. Groups of ten are large enough to be stimulating and small enough to ensure individual attention. This size is comfortable for activities such as role-plays, discussions, mock interviews, practice observations, simulations, and other group exercises.

Small groups also emphasize the importance of each individual volunteer. Trainers should cover each individual's questions and problems. This increases the commitment of volunteers to the group and the task. It also helps build active support for the results and proposals that emerge from them.

At the close of the training session(s), you may want to bring everyone together for a general "skull session" and last-minute instructions. Have some refreshments on hand. You'll be having fun anyway, and this meeting will increase everyone's enthusiasm at the vital moment just before the job begins.

By keeping the time span between training and data gathering as brief as possible, you'll keep motivation high and instruction fresh in people's minds. As they leave, the volunteers should receive instructions summarizing the training sessions.

-- supervising data gatherers --

Like much of Stage IV, the outline of the data gathering itself has been determined by prior decisions. You've designed a model for getting the facts, now all you need is a logistical plan. Plan schedules, responsibilities, assignments, and the like. One person should take charge of the actual data gathering, assisted by a field supervisor for every ten or so volunteers. Both assignments are demanding and require great attention to detail and skill in working with people.

The data gathering coordinator and field supervisors will find AID 21 a useful action-planning aid. By filling it out, or working with a similar format, they'll develop a handy management tool; one that is invaluable for controlling a potentially disorganized process.

Consider each major step in data gathering to be a function. You might have three or four of these, such as making observations, reporting observations, conducting the survey, and collecting the questionnaires. The various tasks necessary to carry out each function should also be listed. For each task, you'll want to know: Who will carry it out? When? Where? How? And who can provide backup?

Commit your plan to written form, on AID 21 or elsewhere. Otherwise, nobody will really feel secure about what is expected of him. You won't have full control of the data gathering. And you won't be able to anticipate and provide for problems before they occur.

The role of each field supervisor is particularly important. It is to support, assist, encourage, and cajole the volunteers. The field supervisor must deliver and pick up materials from the ten workers s/he is responsible for. S/he answers questions, keeps accurate records, arranges for babysitting, helps with transportation, and gives feedback to the coordinator. In short, the field supervisors are the cadre of small group leaders who provide the impetus to get this particular job done. It is helpful if the field supervisor is the person who has trained the data gatherers.

The data gathering process may flow smoothly. On the other hand, volunteers -- and leaders too -- may get discouraged. You may find yourself dishing out large helpings of "emotional chicken soup" to keep people going. Whatever the case, the field supervisor or "captain" system is the best way to get early warning signals about problems, and to ensure a quick response to whatever needs arise in the field.

B. How to Analyze the Facts

Analyzing the facts is a process that will be as simple or complex as the project you undertake. Data analysis means pulling your information together, sorting it, and deciding what it means. The major tasks are therefore compiling information, relating it to your researchable problem, and interpreting the results in terms of your hypotheses, subquestions, or general headings. Before analysis, you have what is called "raw data." This data needs to be summarized and classified so that it can be presented in a way that makes sense to your audience.

Sometimes you can easily visualize a clear, understandable method of analyzing and presenting the facts. A catalogue of community resources, a poll of residents' opinions, or a report on school observations would be the logical result of certain projects. For these, all you may need is a little help on packaging and presenting the data attractively.

Other times, however, data analysis is more complex. In these cases, it is particularly important to have been working with a research-oriented resource person from the time you designed your fact-finding tools. As you already know, the decisions made in designing instruments determine what facts you get. They also largely determine how those facts can be

analyzed. Most groups need help in compiling figures and statistics, showing the relationships between variables, and drawing out unexpected conclusions. While it's not too late to seek that help now, the best source of assistance would be a person who's worked with you all along.

Resource people can alert you to various subtle meanings and implications in the data. They provide an outside perspective on your project. They can help you put the facts in a form that can withstand the scrutiny of bureaucrats and policy-makers. They can alert you to clearly written books such as Kerlinger's Research Methods in the Behavioral Sciences, McCall and Simmons' Participant Observation, Phillips' Social Research: Strategy and Tactics. (See the Resource Directory at the back of this report for more information about these books.)

So, while common sense may well provide you with the basic tools for data analysis, outside help can be useful. Compilation of statistics, graphs, tabulations, and reports can be strengthened by a resource person's familiarity with tools like computers and correlation formulae. Your case will be much stronger once you've tested it against an experienced opinion.

A variety of data analysis methods are at your disposal. The ones you choose depend on what you hope to demonstrate and accomplish. You might want to use bar graphs, tables, charts, figures, or even correlations (See AID 22).

Don't feel that your techniques must be complex. It's better to tabulate and display the results in a simple fashion than to bore people with endless statistics and proof that results did not occur by chance. That degree of complexity may be necessary in large projects, such as citywide citizens' evaluation of a school system. But for most projects, the following from the Gloucester City Aging Project can serve as a good example:

AGING EDUCATION PROJECT DATA SUMMARY

Health: More than two-thirds of those (1200) interviewed declared they had no health problems. Considering the ages of the group, it would appear that the overall health of our senior citizens is good. More than one-half our elderly citizens visit a doctor only as needed; however, 460 visited a doctor monthly or

semi-monthly. Possibly these Gloucester City residents are in a good state of health because of their visits to a physician. A comparatively few, however, do visit a doctor frequently.

Surprisingly and happily, only 29 persons said they had no health coverage of any kind. Many are covered by both insurance, medicare, and/or medicade. A few would not answer the question, but the results show that the older citizens of our city are not without assistance in the event of serious illness. Over two-thirds indicated finances would not interfere with their contacting a physician if needed. One-third said that money was one reason for not seeing a doctor more often. Three out of four would welcome a clinic for senior citizens.

Data Tabulation (Health):

Question: Do you have any health problems that prevent you from getting around on your own?

Yes: 27% No: 70% No Answer: 3%

Question: How often do you visit a physician?

Yearly: 4%
Monthly: 24%
Bi-monthly: 10%
As needed: 62%

Question: What health coverage do you now carry?

None: 3%
Medicare: 22%
Hospitalization Insurance: 3%
Blue Cross/Blue Shield: 15%
More than one type of coverage: 55%
No answer: 2%

Question: Does lack of income prevent you from visiting a physician more frequently?

Yes: 25% No: 73% No answer: 2%

Question: Would you use an "over 60" medical clinic if one were available in Camden County?

Yes: 70% No: 22% No answer: 2%

The results from Gloucester City lent themselves to the type of reporting and tabulation presented above. The author's experience is that in most projects, data can be tallied by hand and presented as totals with an accompanying explanation -- as was done in Gloucester City. Percentage tabulations of the responses to each question are easy to compile and clear to all.

Other projects are more meaningful when they demonstrate relationships between variables. Suppose your group is measuring parent satisfaction with the public schools in your city. The results of one part of your survey could be compiled as follows:

Question: Do you feel satisfied with the quality of education at your child's school?

Answers by school:

	Yes	Somewhat	No	Not Sure
School 1	56%	20%	18%	6%
School 2	61%	29%	2%	8%
School 3	36%	11%	43%	10%
School 4	60%	22%	14%	4%
School 5	59%	32%	7%	2%
School 6	62%	21%	13%	4%

Simply by "eyeballing" the data, you can see that school 3 has a much lower satisfaction rating and a much higher dissatisfaction rating than any of the others. Although you might have the statistics verified by your resource person, it seems as if there is a relationship between being a parent at school 3 and having a low degree of satisfaction with the quality of education at your child's school.

Suppose we also find that school 3 parents place a high premium on order and discipline. If school 3 is an "open-classroom" school with a premium on student self-expression, then we may have begun to discover why parents are so dissatisfied. As you compile your own data, these relationships are often visible if you are alert for them.

Other relationships may not be so obvious, but can be discovered by using correlations. Correlation is a measure of the extent to which two variables are related. Your survey consultant can advise you on correlation techniques that will help you measure the relationship between variables. These techniques are

not too difficult. They should not, however, be used without some outside help or until you've consulted a good statistics primer.

DO YOU FEEL SATISFIED WITH THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL?
?!
YOW!
LATER
AHA! I NOTICE A CORRELATION BETWEEN DISTRICT 3 PARENTS AND A HIGH RATE OF DISSATISFACTION!
YOU DON'T SAY.

If your group has access to a computer, the possibilities for cross-tabulating data and discovering relationships and correlations are enhanced considerably. In large surveys, such as the New Haven project mentioned earlier, a computer is invaluable.

But computers are only as helpful as the people who use them. If you have a computer-wise resource person, you may be able to learn to set up your questionnaires so that they can be easily "keypunched" onto cards; learn to read print out; or perhaps even write a computer program.

In most cases, citizen groups will not need a computer. But if you are planning an extensive survey, or working with a specially-stratified (broken up into different groups such as races, ages, etc.) type of sample, then it may be worth your while to investigate the possibilities of using one. The best sources of help are local school administrators,

professors, or businessmen. They may have access to computers which they can share with you. Equally important, they can assist you in finding a resource person to help you "computerize" your study.

As you design your instrument, check into the question of whether or not to use a computer. By deciding early, you can save work later by preparing your instruments in advance for computerized data analysis.

-- some focusing questions --

Ask yourself the following questions as you review and analyze your "raw data:"*

-What important points do the data reveal?
-Are your totals significant? Why?
-Are your averages important? Why?
-How can categories be arranged and combined to reveal important facts? Important relationships?
-Are your results different than you expected?
-Can you explain obvious exceptions to your conclusions or to dominant patterns?
-What patterns or trends show up? Can you explain them?
-Do any casual relationships or correlations seem important?
-What community factors influence the data?
-How do data from various sources (surveys, readings, depth interviews, documents), compare or contrast?
-What are your overall conclusions?
-What proposals for change emerge from those conclusions?

-- conclusions and consensus --

Once the results are analyzed, think about the implications of your work. What recommendations should be made? To whom? How? Conclusions, interpretations, and proposals must be presented for maximum public

*List adapted from a similar one prepared by Joanne Lema in Conducting A Survey: A Handbook for the Community, Boston University, unpublished manuscript, 1974, p.61.

impact. They form the basis for programmatic action that the community can support.

Before proposals can be made, however, your own group must agree about the interpretation and use of the study. The project steering committee must take the lead in achieving group consensus. This consensus, which is important as a basis for future group action, has been described as a "state in which everyone is 75% happy. Nobody gets everything he wanted; and nobody is shut out."

It is important then, to avoid a quick majority vote. Such action may leave loyal workers feeling "out in the cold" for the first time, perhaps feeling manipulated and in a mood to block further action. All along, you've striven to bring the group together. Don't stray from that course now. Give feelings of commitment to the group and the action-research process a chance to work for you.

Leaders may have to compromise on what the data means or how it is to be used. But workers will be alienated unless they have input into what comes next. AID 23 briefly explains four methods of resolving intra-group conflict about what the data means and/or what to do with it. You might try one if necessary. Note that majority rule is not among them. If the Aid isn't sufficient, seek an outsider (an experienced counselor, mediator, labor leader, clergyman, psychologist, or organizational leader) to help resolve severe splits.

Groups should not assume that the facts themselves will create harmony where there was discord. People can no longer dispute the facts, but they can argue about everything that surrounds them. Disagreement is natural. People with different assumptions and different attitudes have invested in your project. Despite an increase in concern for the group, everyone has a commitment to his/her own ideas. The feelings of ownership and individual empowerment at the heart of action-research may also lead to spirited arguments. The task of the leader is to resolve arguments in a way that builds group strength around group consensus.

-- summary: knowledge is power --

It is in this stage the maxim "knowledge is power" begins to come alive. If you have done your work well, you will probably possess the most up-to-date reliable body of knowledge about "community problem X." Action-research groups frequently know more about what's happening in local schools than local school boards. Public interest and community researchers are frequently the best-informed people about questions in consumerism, environmentalism and transportation planning -- not to mention education.

Capitalize on the fact that "you're the expert." As various institutions and publics become interested in your project, you can show them the "professional quality" of your work:

- -Devise attractive ways to state your case; slide shows are inexpensive and very effective.
- -Hold a community meeting. Invite everyone you interviewed and anyone who might be interested.
- -Develop fact sheets and hold hearings on them. Review each question and explore its implications.

In most cases you won't have to limit access to your information. Encourage opponents to "come out of the woodwork" and help you develop solutions to the problems you've explored or uncovered. Use your hard-won knowledge to gain leverage, build alliances, and add to your constituency. Invite other community groups to make suggestions based on the facts.

But don't be naive or unsuspecting. Until your proposals are developed from the facts and your strategies for change in order, you should avoid relationships and/or circumstances that might lead to the emergence of "campaign style" political opposition to your group.

If you're now saying, "So that's the research. Where's the action?" then you've missed the point. The very process of research, with its wide involvement of community people, is a form of action.

Suppose you've focused on a school. By the time you've come this far you may have stimulated a series of discussions and meetings among teachers, school officials, parents, students and other citizens that

could have happened no other way. The real function of these conversations is the airing of complaints, launching of new ideas, checking of leads, winning of allies, (and discovery of enemies -- all political functions).

This is action. And by the time you've collected and analyzed your facts, you may have all the action (or potential action) you want. Action-research is not a matter of taking facts and translating them into action programs, although some projects may take that tack. The action is already there. A participatory research process has seen to that.

Action-research is a new style of politics, education, and community action. The commitment that comes from participating brings together a cross-section of people and institutions. Participants come face-to-face with problems, and in so doing encourage cooperative steps toward change. Those who come together for informed citizen action may develop alliances and find themselves caught up in the politics of cooperation and problem-solving rather than confrontation and rhetoric.

CHAPTER THREE: USE YOUR KNOWLEDGE AS LEVERAGE FOR CHANGE

I. How to Develop Proposals for Change

Identifying and advocating workable proposals for change is central to all forms of effective community action. Action-research is no exception. Your conclusions drawn from data must be crystallized into a set of proposals that capture the situation, the facts, and their meaning.

Proposals can include:

- -Recommendations for program or policy changes in schools or other agencies;
- -Proposals that your own group can carry out;
- -Invitations to other groups for joint programs;
- -Suggestions for "social inventions" that give a community new approaches to problem-solving.

Focus on priorities once again, as you have throughout the action-research project. Check possible proposals against your overall goals. Let's say your group's overall goal is to change the local school into a truly community-centered one. Action-research has revealed strong interest in after-school and evening classes for adults and programs for children. Your task is to decide among several possible proposals for action:

- -Forming a citizens' committee to develop a community education plan for the school board;
- -Opening the local high school in the evening and holding "high school" and/or "adult" classes at various times of the day and night;
- -Offering all high school classes to the community;
- -Developing a recreation-centered program for the community after school hours;
- -Focusing on using the school as home base for civic, political, and cultural activities.

You can't work on all these possible proposals at once. Decisions must be made about what is most important and what is achievable.

Developing proposals is an important step. You must be absolutely clear, so that the community will understand you. You must make a compelling case so that the community will support you. Keep the following guidelines in mind as you design proposals for change:

- -Summarize proposals into a one or two page statement.
- -Base proposals on the facts. Outline needs, goals, and activities flowing from the data collected.
- -Proposals should be practical in two senses. One, they must be achievable. Two, you must believe that your group has the desire and resources to bring them about.
- -Include a concise, precise, comprehensive explanation of what is wrong and why your proposals would lead to improvement.
- -Proposals can be designed to either change existing institutions or to initiate new ones.
- -Make a compelling case, one that is easily understood.

-Provide the public and/or policy makers with the opportunity to respond to your proposals.
-Base your proposals on a carefully constructed strategy. You need a step-by-step rationale indicating how and why the proposal will become a reality, anticipating potential pitfalls and opposition.
-Present your proposals in open forums, slide shows, community hearings, local newspapers, and other similar ways. This stimulates community awareness and dialogue.

Developing sound proposals is another activity in which resource people can come in handy. After clearly outlining your group's priorities to a resource person, you might see if s/he would prepare a short paper that shapes your data into workable recommendations for change. Such an approach was very successful in a Maryland action-research project.

Alternatively, you might ask a resource person to work on AIDS 24, 25, 26, and 27 with your project steering committee. These aids, particularly when you involve a consultant, will help you think creatively, functionally, and politically about what needs to be done. If a consultant takes part in these exercises with you, you'll learn much about what's been tried elsewhere, what works, and what won't work. Experienced activists and people with volunteer or professional experience in your field are the best sources of help for this activity.

Of course, with or without outside help, your group can get going and develop useful ideas and effective strategies for carrying them out. Brain-storming sessions are again a good starting point for generating ideas. Next, separate the realistic from the impractical suggestions. You might get a more accurate picture of what's realistic.

Community support and assistance are even more important than expert opinion at this point. If people who will help make change aren't involved by now, they must be brought in at the proposal-generating stage. People who help develop proposals are likely to help push for them.

The message is simple. When developing proposals you must involve a cross section of the people who will:

-Be affected by them.
-Be responsible for implementing them and

monitoring their progress as programs.

If you fail to involve these people, you risk opposition and alienation where there could have been active support.

II. How to Design a Follow-Up Change Strategy.

Action-research is a change strategy in itself. By the time you're developing proposals, chances are that you'll be well on your way to making change.

It's also possible that your situation is less promising. You've got the facts and a set of proposals, but little or nothing is happening on the "action-for-change front." Why?

-Perhaps only a few people could work on the project. Rather than do nothing you went ahead and did a study. Now you need to build involvement.

-Perhaps your study is explosive, hard-hitting, or potentially embarrassing to some. You knew it would be, so the project was done quietly. Now you find your group in an adversarial position.

-Perhaps your group proceeded on its own. Now you need to reach the community and prepare other groups to help make change.

-Perhaps you have the facts, you have support, and people have been involved throughout. But that's not enough. The power structure will resist your efforts at change.

-Perhaps you simply need to get more support from policy makers or from the community.

This section is designed to assist groups in situations like those. Despite what seems like adverse circumstances, through patience and careful planning you can use your knowledge to stimulate change.

The material in the pages that follow should also be helpful to groups who find themselves in the

midst of all the action they want. The framework for change may be in place, but you may need help with strategy and tactics.

-- a new style of community politics --

Action-research recognizes the fact that something is missing in politics that emphasize partisanship and differences between people. It seeks to create responsible dialogue around the issues, consensus rooted in fact, and a problem-solving approach to community action. Placed in this context, knowledge is power.*

The use of knowledge is the most important element of planned change. In concluding the handbook, let's turn to three strategies based on the old maxim, "knowledge is power."

1. Increasing public information
2. Re-educating communities
3. Practicing responsible community politics.

INCREASING PUBLIC INFORMATION

"Getting out the facts" can do more than prepare the public for change. It can build support for your proposals among the public and among decision-makers. Information-based strategies are particularly useful when decision-makers need a push from their constituencies. Going public (or the threat of going public) with your information can convince decision makers to work with you.

-- an example: the great transportation debate --

Around 1970, Boston and its inner suburbs were immersed in bitter debate over transportation policy and planning. At stake were the location and design of highways, the fate of neighborhoods, and the question of mass transit versus the automobile.

*Some of the material in this chapter is adapted from Robert Chin and Kenneth D. Benne, "General Strategies for Effecting Changes in Human System," in Waren Benis, Benne, and Chin, The Planning of Change, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, New York, 1969.

The anti-highway forces enlisted the help of technical experts, lawyers, and other resource people who came on board at little or no cost. With that assistance, they develop comprehensive and understandable reports and visual presentations. The anti-highway people organized a broad coalition and lined up political support.

They combined a barrage of public appeals with careful study and skillful politics. They developed the best available set of facts on Boston-area transportation policy and used it to sway the public and the decision-makers in Boston, at the State House, and in the Washington bureaucracies.

The anti-highway coalition was able to completely reverse transportation policy in the Boston region. Where highways had been considered only technical engineering issues in the past, the coalition demonstrated the importance of human implications of transportation decisions.

The job was not easy. Opposition was overcome from powerful sources such as the State Department of Public Works, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the construction industry and at least one major university. The coalition proved the powerful effect of public information on the resolution of major urban issues.

-- letters to the editor provoke town debate --

A veterinarian friend often tells the story of a much smaller scale but equally successful effort of a group of citizens who used information to bring about change in a small Massachusetts community.

Many years ago the "vet" served on a bi-partisan committee in his town. Its charge was to develop a plan for reorganizing several local departments into a consolidated public works department. At the time, the town was rural and residential, but a few citizens anticipated great growth around the corner. Time after time the voters turned down a committee plan for consolidating public works activities if growth came.

Frustrated, the proponents of consolidation devised a unique strategy. They called in the editor of the local paper and told him their idea. One

proponent of consolidation would begin writing "anonymous" letters to the editor in opposition to the plan. The other proponents would respond to this "devil's advocate" by writing in favor of the change.

It seemed like a good way to air the pro's and con's of consolidation, so the editor agreed to publish the letters.

The results surprised even this little group of benevolent conspirators. People from all over town flooded the paper with letters, pro and con. The town people were actually using the paper to debate the issue. Soon the merits of unification became clear. More and more incoming letters supported the change.

The enabling legislation passed easily in the next election. As the town grew, the department was consolidated.

-- the information people need* --

The first two chapters of this handbook took you to other places where similar uses of knowledge have led to change. In New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Texas, Illinois, and elsewhere across the country, people are using action-research to generate information.

Some groups -- such as the high school students in Brockton, Massachusetts -- want to raise consciousness and build a public atmosphere in which change is possible. Others such as SHARE of Wareham -- need information to develop organizational strategies or proposals for change to present to public officials. Others, such as the anti-highway coalition and the small-town public works planners apply their information to change policies and programs. In every case, action-researchers are producing the information people need to cope with problems and changing communities.

-- how to get out the facts --

Once it's time to get your message to the public, a public information campaign can:

*Much of the following information is adapted from Barbara Prentice, "Using Media," unpublished.

-Inform the public of your goals, findings, and recommendations;
-Establish your group's identity;
-Enlist more support.

With some brainstorming and willingness to try new ideas, you can think of surprising, effective, and inexpensive ways to reach everybody in the community.

Mailing Lists

Direct mail is the most effective method of establishing and maintaining communication with your audience. And mailing lists are the core of any direct mail campaign. At the outset of your project, begin compiling the names of all those who express interest in what you're doing. The people working with you are the most important names on the list. These are the people with whom you must communicate constantly, and keep informed of progress and new developments.

Next you will want to add all members of the school community -- teachers, principals, students, school board members, and parents. Include community leaders, both those who hold office and others you know to be influential. Ask all those working on the project to submit names regularly of people they think will be supportive and interested in your work.

The media is the next important addition. Compile a list of newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. Include names of editors, station managers, and public affairs directors. If your project extends beyond your own community, include names of media in the project area. And if your community relies on media from another community, add those names to your list.

Your mailing list will expand quickly, so it's a good idea to develop a filing system. You might want to cross-reference the list so that you can pinpoint separate messages to teachers, administrators, students, the media, or interested parents and citizens.

Newsletters

Newsletters are the cheapest, easiest method of communicating news of your group to the people who want and need to know. Newsletters can be printed or mimeographed on standard 8 1/2 x 11 paper, folded in

three, and mailed by non-profit groups at very reduced rates.

A newsletter is just that -- a letter to convey news. It should not be used to expound your philosophy, or to convince people of the value of your project and/or viewpoint. Save your philosophizing for group discussions, and your consciousness raising for other media.

Slide/Tape Programs

This is the best medium for presenting your arguments with drama and force. It should be used by action-researchers whenever possible. As "a picture is worth a thousand words," the slide/tape combines the impact of the visual message with the drama of the script and possibly music.

A slide/tape can be used effectively for large groups and public meetings or neighborhood hearings. It is relatively simple to produce, as outlined in AID 28.

Slide/tape presentations are a good way to present your message quickly and dramatically. If you've prepared carefully, you won't have to interrupt to look for a lost slide, turn a slide right-side-up, or try to find the place in the script where you should have advanced the slide. Presenting a well put together slide show can be a lot of fun.

Newspapers

Hundreds of news items compete for space in the newspaper every day. How can you make sure they print your message? You can't. But you can increase your chances.

News of your organization should be put together in press releases. All press releases should state news clearly and briefly. Use active verbs, short sentences, simple words. The "lead" or opening of the release should contain the who, what, when, where, why of your message. Each paragraph should contain no more than one idea. Arrange your ideas most important idea first. That way the editor can clip the bottom of your release to fit his space needs without omitting your most important information. AID 29 will assist you in preparing press releases.

The press release format is used to write straight news pieces or announcements. More extensive "feature" articles are usually assigned to reporters on the newspaper staff. Contact the education, news, or city editor about feature articles on your issue, project, or group.

Radio and Television

Radio and television offer a variety of ways for your group to broadcast its message. They welcome interesting people for talk shows, panel discussions and editorial opinions.

Stations need public service announcements to fulfill license requirements established by the Federal Communications Commission. "Timed spots" of 10 seconds, 30 seconds, and 60 seconds are used by radio stations, usually on a rotating basis. These announcements often reach more people than a long newspaper feature, if broadcast at a time when people are listening. But the FCC does not tell the stations when to broadcast public service announcements. You have no guarantee that your message will be broadcast during prime listening hours.

To get your message onto radio and TV airwaves, contact each station to see what format it uses. Some radio stations use only 10 second spots. Some television stations will use only a slide or slides with a taped message. Others will accept one slide with a timed script for the announcer to read. The station managers or public affairs directors will tell you exactly how to prepare your message, and perhaps provide some professional and technical help as well.

The media have a responsibility to the communities they serve. At license renewal time, they must provide evidence of the public service they perform. So don't hesitate to use all media channels in your effort to make change happen. Most stations want to help.

A well-organized public information campaign is one of the most important parts of your action-research project. You can use it to alert the community to problems, enlist support and keep the ball rolling once change begins to develop. Don't stop using the media when your project is over...continue to keep the channels of open communication buzzing with the facts

people need.

OUR GUESTS TONIGHT WERE TWINKLETOES McGEE, HASBEEN TWILIGHT, EGO MANIAC, AND OF COURSE METRO GNOME AND THE ORCHESTRA, THANK YOU FOLKS + GOODNIGHT!
CLAD CLAD CLAD CLAD CLAD
AND NOW FOR A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT-
YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD LET'S-DO-IT ASSOCIATION REMINDS YOU THAT KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!
ZZZZ
DIDNCHA HEAR ME, BILL? I SAID KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!
AND NOW FOR OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM

For more information on public information campaigns, see Words, Pictures, Media: Communication in Educational Politics, by Lloyd Prentice, another I.R.E. Action-Research publication.

RE-EDUCATING COMMUNITIES

Re-educative strategies are based on the idea that facts alone often don't change behavior or attitudes. People need to have new experiences, develop

new relationships, and build new skills before attitudes and behaviors change.

For the action-researcher, this means that people need to become involved with problems in a "hands on" way before their attitudes shift. An action-research program itself is a re-educative change strategy. By involving people in the process of action-research you hope to build support for change. Next, you may need to re-educate the broader community -- or part of it -- with respect to your issue.

In addition to presenting the facts, get the community involved in dealing with them. Use low-key projects like the following:

-Form neighborhood councils;
-Plan and execute a series of small community projects that get people involved;
-Hold neighborhood meetings to air issues, and follow up with workshops that build the skills needed to cope with those issues;
-Ask students to serve as volunteers in various community agencies;
-Use simulations to teach people problem-solving skills;
-Start a school volunteer program to get parents into schools -- (a community school program will do the same thing);
-Involve parents and students in the school's self-evaluation for accreditation.

-- in central Maine --

Last year, the weekly Maine Times carried a story about a school self-evaluation in School Administrative District 49 (Fairfield and the surrounding towns of Clinton, Benton and Albion). Using guidelines for community participation developed by former Maine Education Commissioner Carrol McGarry, citizens and educators began to evaluate their schools.

The idea was that local people should look into their school districts. In doing so they would come face-to-face with educational issues, develop the skills to cope with educational problems, and plan for the future. The process of self-evaluation would be as important as the evaluation report itself.

The process and the report have been controversial. A great deal of timely, if heated, debate about community needs and school policy has been generated. Many local residents, looking at their schools for the first time, developed an interest in education that will serve SAD 49 well in the future.

The self-evaluation process described here is an excellent example of an action-research project -- an inherently re-educative strategy. An evaluation done by the state, a consultant, or a professor might have produced similar findings. But it could not have produced similar community dialogue, participation, and skill building.

-- in suburban Boston --

Every time you decide to increase the community's role in doing a part of the project, you're employing re-educative strategies. In SAD 49, involvement began early. Usually that's the best situation. But you may have to keep a project small at first, and then use re-educative, participatory strategies later to bring others along.

Let's take an example from a regional school district west of Boston. The green suburbs of Lincoln-Sudbury received a federal grant to demonstrate new approaches to controlling educational costs. They began with a committee of about thirty -- school officials, teachers, parents, students and other citizens.

The committee produced several alternative plans, and surveyed the community to:

-Determine community preferences about the plans;
-Make community residents more aware of the project;
-Make community residents more aware of the issues involved in finding and choosing cost-cutting alternatives.

The next step, once the survey raised local awareness levels, was "bringing in the community." The committee conducted a series of conferences, workshops, seminars, and planning sessions for community residents. These working meetings helped the community become directly involved with the issue, develop the knowledge and skills to make an informed judgement about the issues, and build a two-way avenue of communication and support between the school and the public.

The original committee did an action-research project to work on alternatives. They followed it up with a re-educative strategy for involving the community in the change process.

The Lincoln-Sudbury Regional District, by the way, also develops its annual school budget in open meetings with wide citizen input.

-- living room seminars* --

The Living Room Seminars on Creatively Coping with Community Change provide another example of a re-educative strategy that your group can use to follow-up its proposals for change.

The seminars were developed to help people in the inner suburbs of Washington, D.C. cope with the rapid changes occuring in their communities. Each seminar is led by a resource person. Each series has eight meetings. It is a structured approach that emphasizes the neighborhood problems.

First, residents define neighborhood problems and clarify their attitudes about them. Then they choose

*Adapted from Parker Palmer, The Living Room Seminar, The Community Foundation, Inc., Washington, D.C., 1975.

a particular problem and focus on it for the bulk of the seminar series. Finally, each seminar develops a social invention to deal with the problem.

Social inventions are new alternatives or projects designed to meet specific community needs. Once the seminar finds a need, it invents an activity to satisfy it. Some of the inventions reported by the Community Foundation, Inc., which sponsor seminars include:

The Purple People Meeter: In one seminar the participants became interested in the fact that people cope better with change when they feel themselves part of the community than when they feel isolated and alone. They spent a good deal of time discussing the suburban experience of uselessness (the tendency to buy all the services we need, not knowing what our neighbor has to offer, etc.) and how all this contributes to the lack of community in the suburbs. Being useful to one another therefore became for this seminar the key part of the complex notion of "community." To this end, the seminar collected statements from people in their church, statements of things these people would be willing to do for others in the community. These statements were published as a quarterly catalogue of human resources.

The Whole TESS Catalogue: In the Takoma Park-East Silver Spring (TESS) area, another seminar, developing the notion that a sense of community helps people cope with change, chose the dimension of "self-interest." Communities hang together in part because they meet people's interests and needs: convenient schools, interesting little shops, quiet places, places of beauty, etc. The combined listings were published as The Whole TESS Catalogue, a periodic catalogue of community resources.

A Radio Series on the TESS Community: Another seminar in Takoma Park-East Silver Spring emphasized problems and latent resources for solving them available in the area. As their social invention the participants developed five talk-shows aired by the local radio station (WGTS). The purpose of the programs was to raise awareness of community problems and opportunities, and to urge listeners to join in meeting community needs and enriching community life. All programs focused on the TESS area. The series considered the drug scene, youth problems, the churches, politics, and college-community relations.

Bridge the Gap: Participants in a fourth seminar developed "a happening to bridge the gap between young and older people in our community." Flyers throughout the neighboring community announced that participants would be at a church every Tuesday evening from 7 to 9 PM throughout the summer. They offered to share their knowledge and interest in a number of areas including music, block printing, needlepoint, flute, cooking, dramatics, French, Polish, and in the professional fields of law, engineering and accounting. They also invited people "to just plain rap." The flyer invited community persons to share their skills and experiences including mechanics, bricklaying, carpentry, shoemaking, Spanish, Italian, and Greek.

Perhaps these four examples of social inventions enhance our understanding of the purpose and potential of the social invention part of the Living Room Seminar. Note two of the above inventions address the TESS area only, rather than the total area with which the Takoma Park-Silver Spring Community Foundation is concerned. Social inventions may address an area as small as a neighborhood or as large as a town or city.

-- community development --

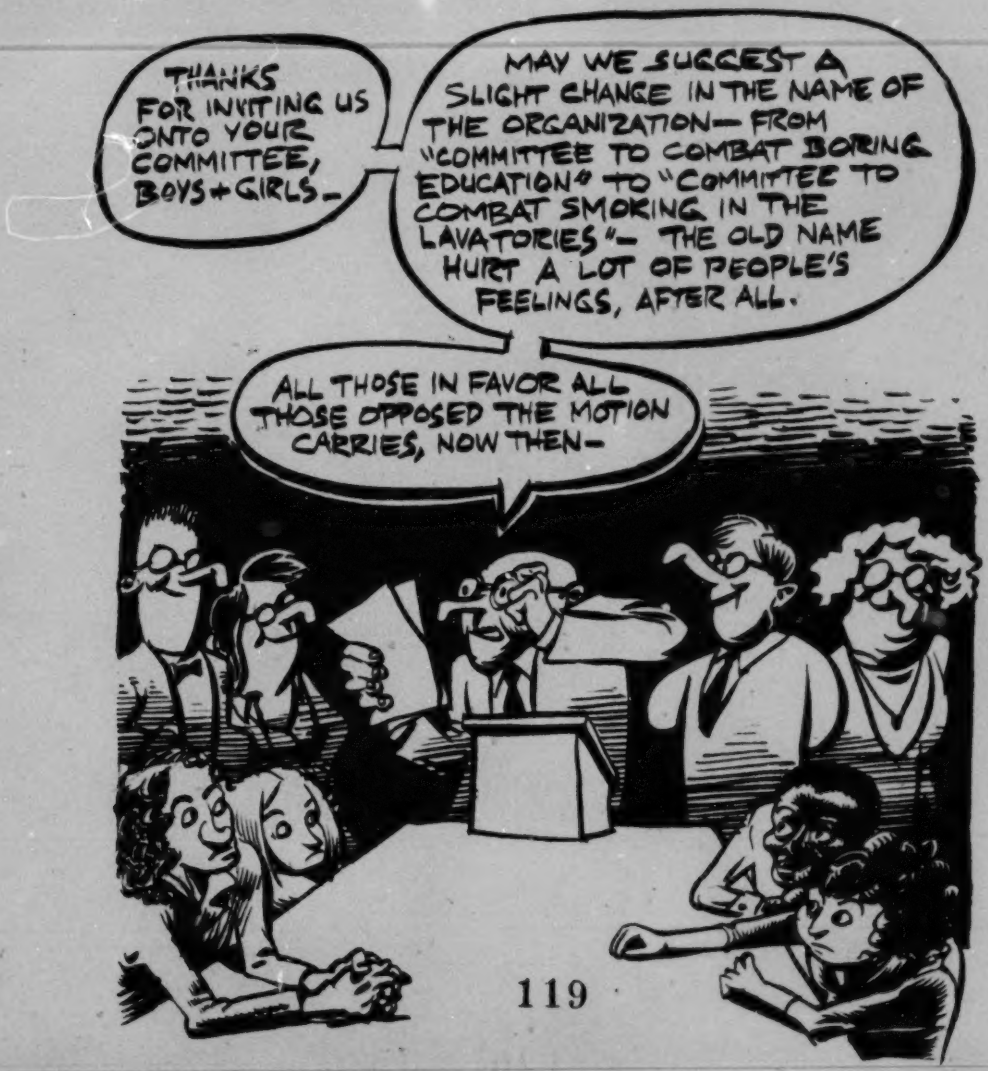
The Living Room Seminar, self-evaluation, and cost-cutting projects mentioned above are examples of "community development." The term is usually associated with such programs as Model Cities, Community Action, United Way, Urban Renewal, or job training. In fact, community development has a broader meaning.

Any program you develop that aims to create new personal and/or institutional resources in a locale classifies as a community development program. High levels of participation in decision-making by community people are usually stressed in these programs.

Many states continue to supply money for these programs. Federal funds are available to qualified groups who can convince local mayors that support is beneficial, since the mayors hold the purse-strings on the disbursement of federal community development money. Private foundations, especially local charities and funds, may be willing to support your group in its own community development program -- large or small. A resource person who is experienced in grantsmanship may be able to tell you if or how you can qualify.

-- summary --

The value of participation as a tool for re-education has been well demonstrated. If the information your group has gathered leads naturally to a re-educative strategy, then get busy planning a workshop, conference, group project, or whatever's appropriate. Stress projects that allow people to meet problems head on. Build community resources and skills. Timing is particularly important in re-educative strategies. Don't bring people you hope to re-educate together before you have "your own act together." An example will be instructive.


THANKS FOR INVITING US ONTO YOUR COMMITTEE, BOYS + GIRLS-
MAY WE SUGGEST A SLIGHT CHANGE IN THE NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION— FROM "COMMITTEE TO COMBAT BORING EDUCATION" TO "COMMITTEE TO COMBAT SMOKING IN THE LAVATORIES"- THE OLD NAME HURT A LOT OF PEOPLE'S FEELINGS, AFTER ALL.
ALL THOSE IN FAVOR ALL THOSE OPPOSED THE MOTION CARRIES, NOW THEN-

We know of one student council that initiated a committee to examine a high school problem. The students did not develop clear goals or a mode of operation prior to including faculty and administrators on the committee. When the committee began to meet, the students found themselves overwhelmed by administrators who wanted to develop solutions before examining the problem. Had the students categorized their own goals and developed a strategy for achieving them before opening the process to administrators, some of these problems might have been avoided.

The value of participatory, action-oriented education is proven in situations that demand changes in personal and group commitments and outlooks. Examples abound:

-The volunteer movement in our country is based on the commitment of millions of people who originally had planned to get involved "just this once."

-The strength of labor organizations is derived at least as much from the feelings of solidarity that come from collective experiences and a sense of common history and purpose as from an intellectual understanding of the benefits of unionism to working people.

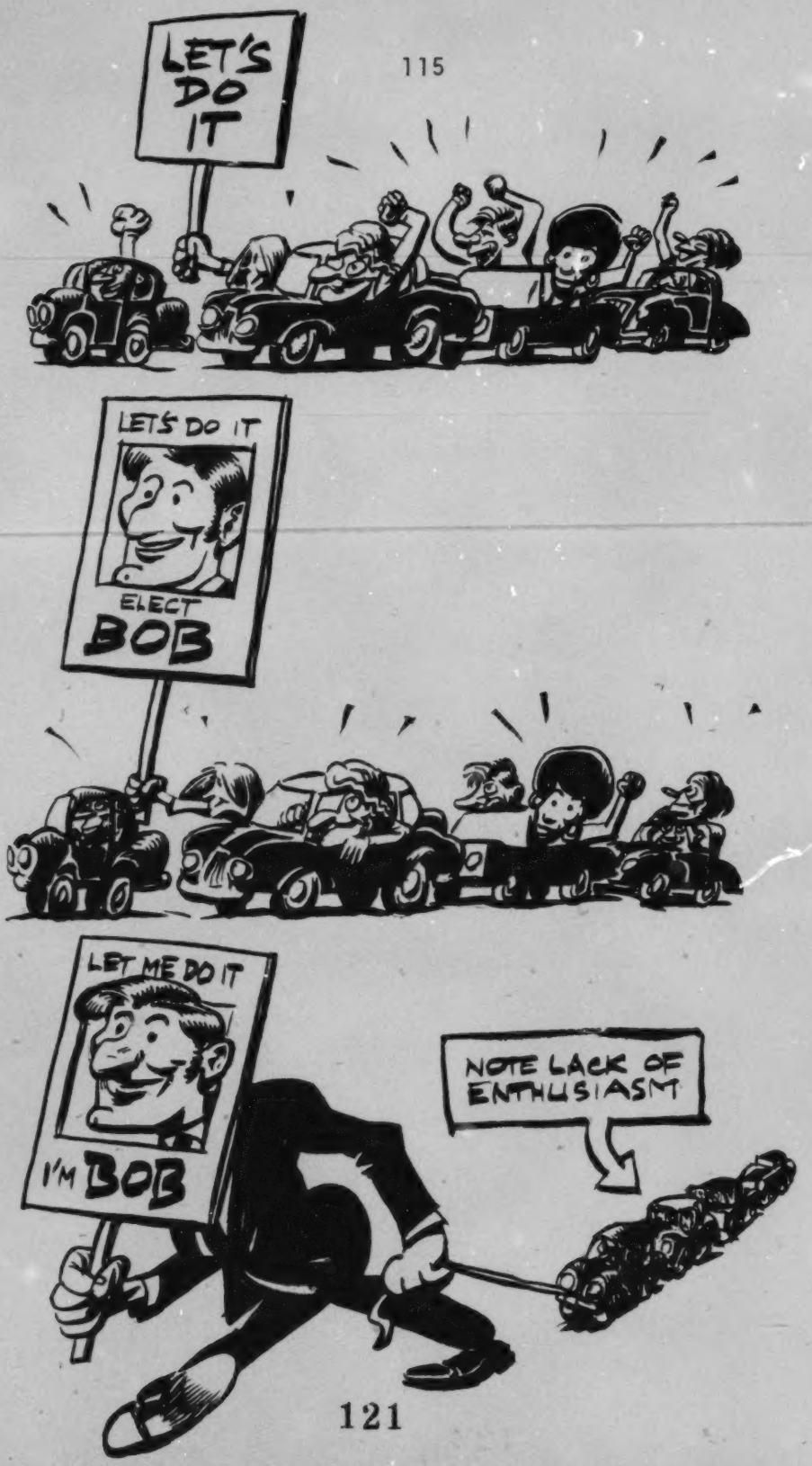
-The community control, citizen participation, and community development efforts found in some cities have strong roots in the experience of low income people with participation during the War on Poverty.

-The increased politicization of the black community has many ties to the involvement of individuals and groups in the civil rights movement and, once again, anti-poverty programs.

Re-educative strategies often take a long time to show results. Used to follow up action-research, they require special patience and skill from your group. View extra time spent as an investment in community-building -- an investment that is necessary to lay the foundation for lasting change. The process of re-education by participation is at least as important as any more tangible products.

RESPONSIBLE COMMUNITY POLITICS

The Watergate incidents and the mini-Watergates which have cropped up in the state houses and on main streets around the country have tended to pollute the


LET'S DO IT
LET'S DO IT
ELECT
BOB
LET ME DO IT
I'M BOB
NOTE LACK OF ENTHUSIASM

political process. They have shaken public confidence in government and political leadership. Community activists werewary of politics-as-usual long before general public suspicion grew. But activists also recognize that the political system can be used by citizen groups who want to make change. Knowing when and how to work through the political system is the key.

Working through established political channels does not necessarily mean politics-as-usual. As an action-research group, knowledge about an issue and public support for your proposals are your prime resources. Your political strategies should avoid easy answers, empty promises, and closed-door decisions. Your politics should be issue-oriented and educational for both the public and public officials.

Responsible community politics means that winning an election or vote is not the most important part of political action. Winning is important, but increasing a community's capacity to deal with the issues it confronts -- especially your issue -- is one of your important goals. You want to open the issue and help the community find short and long run approaches to handling them. Your set of proposals is the approach your group advocates.

Political strategies include running for office, working for legislation, forming special interest groups, building coalitions, and increasing public knowledge. They become more significant with the added objectives of educating the community and/or preparing it for change. By emphasizing those added objectives, your action-research group can use established political channels as routes to real change.

Throughout the handbook, the politics of cooperation have been emphasized. The effectiveness of confrontation tactics for action-researchers has been minimized. The point needs no restatement, but there nonetheless are times when your group may need to take an adversarial stance.

-- when there's opposition --

In many situations, no matter how hard you've tried to build support and operate collaboratively, opposition to your group and its proposals will emerge. Perhaps you are:

-Supporting unpopular policies;
-Competing for public support with the established power structure;
-Facing political opposition from influential individuals or other community groups;
-Advocating proposals that are threatening to school professionals;
-Organizing against the system itself.

In these or similar situations you often come to a point where you recognize that unless you use power, influence, or confrontation tactics to persuade people to accept the changes you propose, those changes won't happen.

The problem becomes how to harness power or authority so that its energy is directed in support of your proposals. "The influence process involved is basically that of compliance of those with less power to the plans, directions, and leadership of those with greater power...the strategy may involve getting the authority of law or administrative authority behind the change."*

Mobilizing public opinion, strong political or economic pressure, using sanctions for non-compliance, mass demonstration, legal action, administrative ruling and confrontation politics are examples of directing energy in support of your proposals. Some others are:

-The NAACP has frequently taken legal action to employ the authority of the courts, and used economic boycotts to employ the power of the dollar. In both cases the goal was to speed desegregation.

-Anti-war protesters have attempted to mobilize the power of public opinion through mass demonstrations that attracted attention to their cause and confronted policy-makers with the strength of their convictions.

*Chin, et al, p.34. Authority refers to legally or organizationally recognized power. Power itself, however, is the influence needed to direct someone else's behavior toward your goals. In most states, for example, school board members have authority over school policy only as a group. As you know, however, a particular board member may have the power to influence policy greatly.

-Students and parents, unsatisfied with a principal's decision, have frequently gone "over his/her head" to the superintendent or the courts where they appeal the ruling to higher administrative or legal authority.

-Parents and teacher groups in several states, unhappy with the quality of special education, have lobbied state legislators and successfully fought for far-reaching laws on educating the handicapped.

Chances are that you know the power structure in your community. If not, by this point in an action-research project you will. Your task is to marshall enough of that power and to apply it at the right places.

Sometimes all you need is the support and/or authority of a key individual--a judge, a mayor, a school superintendent, or a behind-the-scenes "kingmaker." Other times, you need to influence a group of decision makers, such as a board, a legislature, a committee, or a school faculty.

Rally the supportive members of the group and work on the "undecideds." Forget the bedrock opponents. They are unlikely to support you under any circumstances. By using information, re-education, and influence, you may be able to build enough support among the decision-makers so that, as a group, they'll use their authority in support of your proposals.

Since action-research emphasizes cooperation rather than conflict, the question of when to use confrontation tactics is especially important. Far too often, people assume that conflict is needed and move headlong into confrontation when the potential for collaboration exists. Don't make that mistake. But at the same time there are many circumstances in which strategies including confrontation can be effective:

-when you are seeking to change behavior that is clearly illegal -- such as sex discrimination, school segregation, or violation of free speech. There is often little hope that such change will come without resort to the courts, legislatures or administrative channels.

-when you seek mass public support to counteract blatant injustice. Dramatize that injustice through public information and protest activities.

-when you need to apply the influence of higher authority to reverse inappropriate actions. Examples include asking a state official to demand a change in the operation of local practices, getting state law passed on a subject when none presently exists, appealing to the school board or superintendent about the behavior of a principal.

-when you are seeking to hold an elected official politically accountable.

In these situations and others in which power and authority are used to force non-violent change, your group must remove the element of choice from your opponents. Build enough support so that their opposition to change is insufficient to block your proposals.

-- the limits of power politics --

The use of power politics has one obvious disadvantage. Even if your group "wins," its "victory" can be undone by opponents who mass greater support in the future. Unless real change in public attitudes and skill develop as a result of your change strategy, your proposals can be reversed by counterpolitics.

Proposals developed from broad community support have a much better chance of surviving shifts in the political wind. To use influence to effect real change, you must accompany and/or follow-up power politics with efforts for increasing community knowledge, understanding and skills.

Thus change strategies that simply energize influence and authority behind your proposals are incomplete. They lead to real change only when accompanied by activities that add to your community's understanding of and ability to deal with imposed change. The lack of such supportive activities on behalf of government-imposed changes such as school desegregation and public welfare, for instance, is a continuing problem decades after the original policy decisions were made.

The responsible application of power and authority to overcome opposition to change is something your group must consider in its own setting. Once you decide to use power, you have a responsibility to prepare those who will be affected.

How you use public information will be an important consideration. What types of workshops, community hearings, citizen councils and other participatory forms of community re-education you employ is equally significant. Don't settle for the old saw that "change is always traumatic, the people will adjust eventually." Too often they won't adjust, or will be bitter opponents who will undo the work you've done at the first opportunity.

In addition to the techniques mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are many ways in which you can use established political channels. Let's turn to two examples.

-- running for office --

Your proposals will probably furnish a platform upon which someone can build a campaign for office. What's more, a grassroots political campaign can further your objectives and give your group a voice on the school board or other policy-making body. The campaign itself is a natural forum for your issue, a source of volunteers, a method of educating the public, and an opportunity to increase support.

Political campaigns also have drawbacks for citizen groups. The campaign opens the door for emotionally charged counterattacks which may confuse the public about your proposals.

Furthermore, politics can sweep you up in personalities and re-route your path -- leading you away from the issues. Commitment to a candidate rather than the issue, even a candidate who represents your group and issue, often leads to disappointing results. Once in office you may find that the candidate's priorities have changed. Your issue has been exploited and played out. Then what do you do?

Campaigns are also energy-sapping. Your candidate may be defeated and the group could disappear with that defeat. Or the candidate win, and your group consider its work done. Whether your candidate

wins or loses, you'll have to maintain strength in order to see your proposals become policies and programs.

-- warning signals --

Many groups find that avoiding direct participation in political campaigns is the best course. For one thing, political activity jeopardizes your group's non-profit, tax-exempt status. Organizations that seek non-profit status (Internal Revenue Service Section 501 3C) have a much easier time getting grants from foundations and government organizations, as well as breaks on postage and taxes, than groups without IRS approval. But Section 501 3C status does ban the organization from most forms of lobbying, supporting candidates, and other direct political activities. Other non-profit groups -- such as the League of Women Voters -- can be more explicitly political but relinguish their tax exempt status.

More importantly, people are turned off by the appearance of electoral politics. If they think that your group is a "front" for a candidate(s) they may be reluctant to support it much less join it. Citizen organizations often weigh the potential benefits of backing a candidate against the loss of credibility that can go with being identified closely with a candidate.

The disadvantages listed are simply warning signals. The potential benefits of sponsoring candidates for office are high. But there are costs. You'll want to balance the plusses and minuses in your own community. The balance sheet technique shown in AIDS 5 and 24 can be applied to this task.

-- an interest group model --

Action-research groups share many of the characteristics of special interest groups. Yours is probably no exception. You

-Organize around an issue;
-Are at least as well informed as decision-makers about the issue;
-May testify at hearings, influence and monitor court decisions, legislation

and executive policy;
-Develop support for your cause by means of publicity and other public-information activities;
-Lobby to further your interest;
-Represent an effective channel for public input into decisions.

The interest group model is one that the action-research group can adopt naturally in pursuit of its proposals.

By adopting the interest group model, you'll leave many options open -- including sponsorship or support of political candidates. You can continue to design studies and proposals, and use the media, conferences, workshops, and other forms of communication for advocacy. You can work behind the scenes to quietly convince decision-makers.

As an interest group, you can write and fight for legislation. You can keep public interest high to put the "heat" on wavering legislators. You can urge citizens who favor change to write letters or place calls to the appropriate officials. You can inform the public about key hearings and the progress of specific legislation. You can build support for change in the law with a public information campaign. (Before lobbying, however, be sure that you check state and federal laws regulating lobbyists and tax exempt, non-profit organizations.)

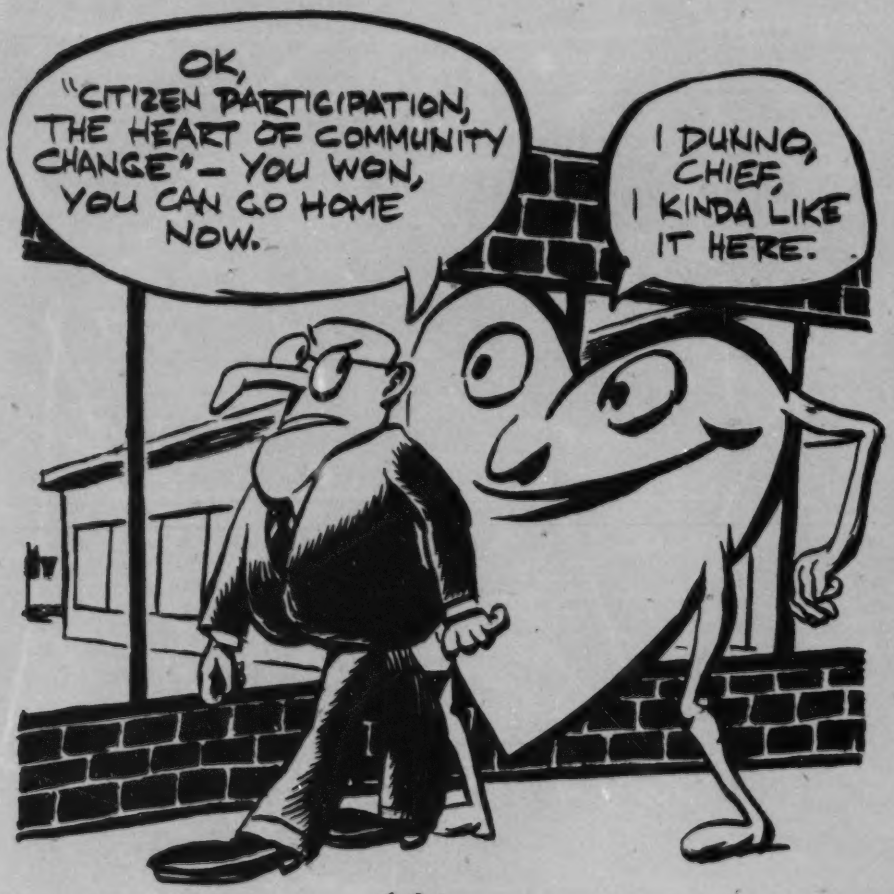
Another alternative under the interest group umbrella is to seek outside funding for your activities. Federal, state and foundation funds -- as well as individual gifts -- are usually available only to incorporated, non-profit, tax-exempt groups. If your group doesn't have that status but wants it, meet with a public interest law group or lawyer friend to find out how to incorporate under IRS 501 3C. But remember, 501 3C status restricts your direct political activities.

Another alternative is to form coalitions with other groups. Just a few groups working together in a mutually supportive way can have a snowball effect in terms of influence. This is particularly true at the state level, where support from more than one community is usually needed to effect policy or program change.

The interest group model can be adopted successfully by action-researchers. And it can be adapted

to many types of political activities. Once you've completed an action-research project, you'll have developed many of the skills you need to be an effective interest group.

Electoral and interest group politics are two ways that action-researchers can enter the political arena. Politics in the traditional sense is hardly the focus of action-research, but there is much to be gained by following up proposals with responsible political action. Your proposals may inevitably lead to the school board, mayor's office, or state legislature. But if you do enter established political channels, don't abandon the idea that people need the facts for a change.



SUMMARY: WHAT NEXT?

You're the experts. You've got the facts. You've probably got some support. People are interested and involved. Your head may be spinning with ideas for using information, re-education, or responsible politics to follow up your proposals for change.

Use AID 30 to design your own follow-up strategy and tactics. As you imagine and play them out, ask an observer/resource person or a member of your group to play the devil's advocate. Someone should be constantly probing and checking out your assumptions and plans. You've planned and set priorities throughout the project. Continue to do so in taking the last steps toward change.

Once your project is over, decide whether or not your group wants to stay together. As you know, the interest group model is a particularly promising structure for action-researchers who are committed to a single issue. If you are part of an established group already, perhaps you'll want to form a permanent subcommittee on your issue.

A broader option is to create a permanent citizen action-research group in your community. You've already initiated it. You can move to new issues to involve people with different interests. You can, after all, use action-research as the basic tool for dealing with a variety of community problems.

By using action-research as a base, you may be able to develop an ongoing, more permanent coalition to improve your community and its schools. You'll have the names, lists, contacts, skills and other resources. Generating successful citizen involvement is not an easy task. Once it comes alive, don't let it die.

Seek new challenges. You know that they exist -- in the community and in the schools. Action-research can be a powerful structure for facing those challenges with informed citizen participation -- the heart of community change.

-- Resource Directory* --

A. Institutions

American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel, Inc.
500 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10036
(212) 524-5468

As the trade association for fund-raising firms, the Association maintains records of current grants and foundations. Publications include a monthly Bulletin and an annual Giving. The Association can refer you to professional fund-raisers in your area.

American Civil Liberties Union
22 East 40th Street
New York, N.Y. 10016
(212) 725-1222

The ACLU is a nonprofit law group with the goals of protecting and extending the rights of individuals. ACLU maintains an extensive library and publishes a paper (Civil Liberties), policy statements, pamphlets, and handbooks. These can be purchased from a publication list. The ACLU can help with legal advice and take on litigation when an individual believes his/her civil liberties have been violated.

American Educational Research Association
1126 16th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 223-9485

AERA is an association of professors and other people interested in educational research. Although their concerns are most academic than those of more action-researchers, they maintain an extensive file and referral service on persons and organizations conducting research. AERA publishes three magazines: Educational Researcher, a monthly; American Educational Research Journal, four times a year; and Review of Educational Research, five times a year. They also publish books, magazines, abstracts and directories.

*Some of the descriptions in this section are adapted from Joanne Lema's, "Mass/PACTS Resource Directory," in Together and Don Davies', Citizen Participation in Education: Annotated Bibliography, both I.R.E. publications; and Community Resource Centers, National Self Help Resource Center, Washington, D.C., 1976.

American Federation of Teachers
11 DuPont
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 737-6141

AFT is a union whose affiliates represent classroom teachers in many of the nation's largest cities. Although its purpose is to further the interest of the classroom teacher, AFT can be of use to citizen groups. The union has an excellent program of publications about educational issues and current problems such as the urban crisis. Citizens who will find themselves working with teacher groups should not ignore AFT. Publications such as American Teacher (monthly), Changing Education (quarterly) and the AFT-Quest series provide useful information filtered through the AFT perspective.

American Friends Service Committee
160 North 15th Street
Philadelphia, PA.
(215) 241-7000

The Committee's activities include social and technical assistance, work and study projects for young people, seminars and other school projects. The Committee plays an important role in working toward the solution of social problems in the U.S., particularly those that involve minorities.

Center for Law and Education at Harvard University
Larsen Hall
14 Appian Way
Cambridge, MA. 02138
(617) 495-4666

The Center for Law and Education is a legal resource in the area of educational issues. It has a number of publication, including the quarterly Inequality in Education and handbooks such as Alternative Schools: A Practical Manual. A price list is available upon request.

Center for the Study of Parent Involvement
2544 Etna Street
Berkeley, CA 94704

CSPI conducts research, provides assistance to schools, community organizers, and teacher trainers. It offers information regarding parent involvement in legislation, administration, and experimental schools in its newsletter, Apple Pie. Occasionally, CSPI publishes full papers on parent involvement.

The Foundation Center
1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 331-1400

The Center keeps records on 26,000 foundations and charitable trusts and monitors the distribution of foundation grants. They publish the Foundation Directory and The Foundation Grants Index, in addition to booklets and brochures. By calling Washington, you can locate the nearest of their fifty regional collections in libraries across the country.

The Grantsmanship Center
1015 W. Olympic Blvd.
Los Angeles, California 90015
(213) 485-9094

The Grantsmanship News, is a newsletter published by the Grantsmanship Center, available by subscription for $15 a year. It includes current information on foundation activities and excellent suggestions for grant-seekers. The Grantsmanship Center also sponsors proposal-writing seminars in major U.S. cities.

Home and School Institute, Inc.
Trinity College
Washington, D.C. 20017
(202) 269-2371

Courses and workshops of the Institute focus on the initial issues in home-school-community relations today. Summer workshops are available.

Information and Materials Center
U.S. Office of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 245-8437

The Information and Materials Branch, in collaboration with the Association of American Publishers, Inc., the Children's Book Council, Inc., and Individual publishers, maintains special exhibits and reference services. New textbooks and children's literature in all curriculum areas, new books related to teacher education, instructional materials and professional literature focusing on OE priorities, and educational publications of other government agencies are available on a non-circulating basis for examination and study. Resources available are: Office of Education publications, other current materials about education, and reference service to other centers.

Institute for Responsive Education
704 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 353-3309

I.R.E. was funded to study and assist the process of citizen participation in educational decision-making. The Institute's prime areas of activity are field work, publication, and research. Limited advice and technical assistance are available when practical, but I.R.E's focus is on helping community people develop their own skills and resources. Publications include a quarterly, Citizen Action in Education and a series of reports and books listed on the back cover of this publication.

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law
733 15th St., NW
Washington, DC
(202) 628-6700

The Lawyers' Committee monitors the implementation of state and federal legislation and regulations that affect minorities and the poor. The Committee has an active interest in Title I, Vocational Education, and parent participation. It has a litigation budget to undertake important civil rights cases.

League of Women Voters
1520 New Hampshire Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 296-1770

The League is a national voter education organization with statewide and local affiliates. The League and its affiliates sponsor conferences and studies, pamphlets and booklets. Education has traditionally been a priority item for the League.

National Alternative Schools Programs
University of Massachusetts
School of Education
Amherst, MA 01002
(413) 545-0941

NASP's goal is to assist the establishment, maintenance, and improvement of public alternative schools. It does research, disseminates the results, holds conferences and provides technical assistance to all alternative schools. The Program also trains teachers and leaders in alternative education; and has attempted to create an information flow in the field of alternative education.

National Commission on Resources for Youth, Inc.
36 West 44th Street
New York, NY 10036
(212) 682-3339

The NCRY is a non-profit organization formed in 1967 to collect and disseminate information on innovative programs which provide youth with opportunities to assume rewarding and responsible roles in society. NCRY provides how-to-do-it material in print, on films and videotapes about programs in youth participation. NCRY also develops model programs. Youth Tutor Youth is a model in which older students teacher younger students on a one-to-one ratio. It has become a nation-wide program with more than 500 cities participating. The Day Care Youth Helper Program is a model in which junior and senior high school students take a school course in Parenting or Child Development and work with preschool children in day care centers.

National Committee for Citizens in Education
Suite 410, Wilde Lake Village Green
Columbia, Maryland 21044
(301) 997-9300

NCCE is dedicated to increasing citizen involvement in the affairs of the nation's public schools. The Committee has established a toll-free citizen information line: 800-NETWORK. Publications of the Committee include National Committee Guides and a monthly report on school issues.

National Community Education Association
1017 Avon Street
Flint, Michigan 48503
(313) 234-1634

NCEA is a membership association which serves as a national information clearinghouse, advocacy group and communications-network for community education. Among the NCEA's activities are conferences, workshops, research, publication, and leadership training. Many NCEA members staff the more than sixty Community Education Development Centers found throughout the country. The Centers provide free consultation in community education, development, and involvement. Call the NCEA to locate the Center nearest you.

National Congress of Parents and Teachers
700 North Rush Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
(312) 787-0977

The National PTA works "with the schools to provide quality education for all children and youth and (seeks) to participate in the decision-making process establishing school policy." (PTA Handbook, 1973-1975) The organization has many local and state affiliates, and publishes a monthly PTA magazine and periodic state bulletins.

National Education Association
1201 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 833-4000

NEA is the largest association of professional educators in the U.S. It has interests in most aspects of public education, but is primarily concerned with the protection and improvement of the teaching profession.

Publications of the NEA and its research division are available by writing to the NEA Order Department, Academic Building, Saw Mill Road, West Haven, CT 06516

National Information Center on Volunteerism
POBox 4179
Boulder, Colorado 80302
(303) 447-0492

The Center maintains a library on problem-solving for planning and starting a program, recruiting volunteers, public relations, funding, and other areas pertinent to volunteerism.

National School Boards Association
800 State National Bank Plaza
POBox 1496
Evanston, Illinois 60204

Some of the purposes and services of the Association include the following: it acts as a clearinghouse for the dissemination of pertinent data relating to all aspects of public education, establishing appropriate material and publications for such purpose. It encourages efficient and effective organization and administration of the public schools. It works for the adequate and equitable financial support of the public schools; studies and interprets educational programs and relates them to the needs of pupils; conducts, independently or in cooperation with others, seminars, conferences, courses and research projects in the various aspects of education. It studies and interprets legislation proposed in Congress that may affect education and takes appropriate means to disseminate such knowledge and information.

National School Public Relations Association
1801 North Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 528-5840

NSPRA's goal is to advance education through responsible communication. NSPRA has developed a talent bank of consultants to provide inservice and special staff development programs. Available workshops cover a wide range for the building principals, support staff, parents, boards of education, classroom teachers, and for those facing operating levy or bond issue elections. NSPRA is also ready with talent and

materials to develop special programs to meet specific needs of school districts across the nation. Each contract is developed individually with the fee established on content and assignment.

NSPRA also provides help to school districts requesting an evaluation of their communication program and assistance to a full-scale on-site project including a survey of community attitudes.

National Self Help Resource Center, Inc.
1800 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 338-5704

The Center advocates and assists skill and resource development at the local level. Among its publications are UPLIFT, a series of 100 case studies of "what people can do" and Community Resource Centers: The Notebook, a how-to-book on developing community resources effectively for community use.

Organizer's Book Center
POBox 21066
Washington, DC 20009

OBC is a mail-order and publishing project distributing practical organizing materials from Saul Alinsky and Ralph Nader to the NACLA Research and Methodology Guide, and the New Women's Survival Catalog. A general brochure covers tenant organizing, community schools, cable TV and other areas; a separate brochure offers resources for women's organizing.

Rurban Educational Development Laboratory
College of Education
University of Illinois
Urbane, Illinois 61820
(215) 333-8087

The Lab offers a series of useful publications on citizen advisory councils and committees.

United Bronx Parents
791 Prospect Avenue
Bronx, New York 10455
(212) 993-5300

The United Bronx Parents is a community action group that has made their own experiences available in the form of publications in both English and Spanish. Their inexpensive (25¢-$1.) pamphlets and materials cover topics like curriculum, school evaluation, budgets, staff evaluation, and parent and student rights. A price list is available.

The Support Center
1424 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC
(202) 265-2443

The Support Center is a nonprofit, public interest organization that provides other public interest organizations with support in financial management, personnel, office management, communication and financial development, management planning, and management systems. Fees are based on the client organization's ability to pay. To request assistance or discuss services, call or write.

Volunteers for International Technical Assistance
3706 Rhode Island Avenue
Mt. Ranier, Maryland 20822
(301) 277-7000

VITA is an "Agency for Volunteer Technical and Professional Services." It serves as liason between organizations which want and need professional assistance and volunteers who have time and skills to give. VITA also offers a resource library, training workshops, and publications (e.g. Manual of Practical Fundraising). VITA maintains an active network of volunteers although domestic activities are currently somewhat curtailed.

Volunteer Consultant Network
National Center for Voluntary Action
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC
(800) 424-8630

The center can provide your group with a consultant at minimal cost. Services include technical assistance in planning and training, problem-solving,

management, and evaluation.

B. Periodicals

Apple Pie is a newsletter containing "how to" oriented news of legislation, administrative regulations, staff development programs, trends, and conferences related to parental involvement in education. You can order it by writing to The Center for the Study of Parent Involvement, 2544 Etna Street, Berkeley, CA 94704.

The American School Board Journal is written for board of education members. The Journal prints a broad spectrum of articles related to educational programs and the governance of schools. You can find the Journal in almost any university library or at your school superintendent's office.

Citizen Action in Education is the quarterly journal of the Institute for Responsive Education. It addresses issues of interest in school-community relations. It is available by request c/o I.R.E. 704 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, MA. 02215

ERIC is the acronym for the Educational Resources Information Center. It is a computerized information service which publishes a quarterly, Resources in Education, that indexes and summarizes printed matter on all areas of education. The ERIC system is available to you through most large, public university, and state college libraries.

The Harvard Educational Review is a scholarly journal devoted to the discussion of major policy issues in education. Written primarily for professors, students, and education professionals, this publication frequently discusses issues of concern to the informed, concerned lay person. It is available at public and university libraries.

The Home and School Institute Newsletter is especially designed for parents, community leaders, and educators. Its focus is on ways to build a more effective home-school educational partnership. It is available by writing to The Home and School Institute, Trinity College, Washington, D.C. 20017.

Inequality in Education focuses on the relationship between legal and educational issues. It is available in many libraries and by request c/o the Center for Law and Education, Larson Hall, 14 Appian Way, Cambridge, MA. 02138

NETWORK is published eight times during the school year by the National Committee for Citizens in Education. It reports on educational issues of interest to citizens, and can be obtained by writing to NCCE, Suite 410, Wilde Lake Village Green, Columbia, Maryland.

Phi Delta Kappan is the journal of Phi Delta Kappa, a professional education fraternity. PDK covers a wide range of topics in education. While directed at professionals, it can be of great use to the informed lay person. PDK is available at most public and university libraries.

C. Books on Research Methods

Bollens, John and Marshall Dale, A Guide to Participation, Prentice Hall, 1973. This book is useful for teachers who want to involve students in action-research and community groups about to tackle researchable problems. It includes several excellent sections on defining problems, choosing research methods, stimulating participation, keeping groups moving, and analyzing and reporting data.

Bosstick, Maurice and Cable, John L., Patterns in the Sand: An Exploration in Mathematics, Glencoe Press, 1971. Chapter 5 (pp.207-251) is one of the best discussions of elementary statistics to be found anywhere. Geared to the beginner, the chapter explains means, medians, modes, standard deviations, normal (bell) curves, and sampling with unusual clarity -- in an easy-to-read style unusual for a math book. Chapter 5 is an excellent statistics primer, even for those apprehensive of mathematics.

Burges, Bill, Facts and Figures, Institute for Responsive Education, 1976. This guide to surveys is written for both laymen and educators. It contains instruction in survey methods and interview techniques; and several sample questionnaires and case studies.

Burges, Bill, You Can Look It Up, Institute for Responsive Education, 1976. Written for laymen, students, educators, and board of education members, this is a brief guide to sources of information written about education. It is designed to help the reader find the best books, periodicals, indexes, newspapers, etc. with the smallest amount of wasted time and energy.

Ferreira, Joseph and Burges, Bill, Collecting Evidence, Institute for Responsive Education, 1975. Collecting Evidence is a lay person's guide to field research by means of observations, depth interviews and unobtrusive measures. Specific how-to ideas and exercises for citizens are included.

Kerlinger, Frederick, Foundations of Behavioral Research, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1973, 2nd edition. This college and graduate school textbook is one of the finest in its field, supplying

explanations of both the theoretical and practical aspects of research. Much of the book is devoted to surveys and other quantitative methods, and the statistical information needed to use these techniques. Nonetheless, the author also explains other methods such as field research, depth interviews, and historiography. Two of the best sections cover defining the researchable problem and designing the research strategy. The book is written clearly and simply, and has many examples.

McCall, George J. and Simmons, J.L., Issues in Participant Observation, Addison-Wesley, 1969. A text and reader on field research, the McCall/Simmons book details the theoretical background, general methods, and pros and cons of first-hand research. The book is a collection of significant contributions to the literature on field research. Written primarily for researchers, it nonetheless contains much information that would be helpful in a citizens' study.

National School Public Relations Association, Polling and Survey Research, NSPRA, 1973. This twenty-page manual declares that the same problems that keep information from flowing out of schools keep information from flowing in. It cites research on the pros and cons of the interview vs. the questionnaire, various methods of constructing poll questions and analyzing data, and describes model survey techniques developed in Michigan, Nebraska, and California.

Phillips, Bernard, Social Research: Strategy and Tactics, MacMillan, 1966. Like the Kerlinger book, Social Research puts various research methods in the context of various types of researchable problems. Written for college students, it is a good source of information for the informed layman with some background in research or statistics.

Survey Research Center, Interviewer Manual, University of Michigan, 1969. In this short book, you'll find the directions provided to interviewers by one of the world's best known survey centers. Additionally, the manual includes valuable and detailed information on sampling and other facets of survey research.

Vannatta, Glen D., Carnahan, Walter H., and Fawcett, Harold P., Advanced High School Mathematics, Charles E. Merrill Books, 1961. This is a book for juniors and seniors in high school mathematics. Chapter 12 is an excellent introduction to descriptive statistics. It is slightly more complex and detailed than Bosstick and Cable's treatment of the same material.

Weinberg, Eve, Surveys With Local Talent, National Opinion Research Center, 1971. A how-to handbook for undertaking community surveys, this is an excellent source of material and resources for community groups and educators interested in conducting polls.

D. Books About Change

Action Guide for Community Organizers, Department of Urban Community Services, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Ga. Written for the community organizer, it discusses setting priorities; how to recruit, retain, and reward members; and how to plan and hold an effective meeting.

Alinsky, Saul D. Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals, Random House, 1971. Mr. Alinsky draws on his experience as the most successful community organizer of his generation to give concrete priorities, perspectives, and tools to future organizers.

Bemis, Warren, Benne, Kenneth, and Chin, Robert, The Planning of Change, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969. The authors present a theoretical, but practical collection of conceptual articles on effecting planned change.

Cave, Ronald G., Partnership for Change: Parents and Schools, Ward Lock Education, 1970. Based on his experiences with British schools, the author develops an operative manual designed for both parents and school officials.

Clasby, Miriam, Together: Schools and Communities, Institute for Responsive Education, Boston, 1975. A year of field research on school/community collaboration in Massachusetts led to the preparation of this extensive handbook and resource directory for people who want to work together to improve the schools.

Ecklein, J.L. and Laufer, Armand, Community Organizers and Social Planners, John Wiley and Sons, 1972. Theoretical and how-to-do-it chapters may prove helpful to both professional planning interventions in a community and citizens organizing to influence local policy decisions.

Hess, Hannah S., The Third Side of the Desk: How Citizens Can Change the Schools, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973. The author presents a parents perspective on one elementary school during the New York school strike, and in doing so provides many lessons for parents who find themselves dealing with an unresponsive educational bureaucracy.

The Home-School New Educational Partnership, Home and School Institute, Washington, D.C., 1974. This handbook of activities is designed to increase parents involvement (within the home) on their children's learning.

Huenfeld, John, The Community Activist's Handbook, Beacon Press, 1974. The author details how to develop a citizen's organization, manage it, and influence policy making through community action.

Kozol, Jonathan, Free Schools, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972. Mr. Kozol, a well-known educational critic, presents a deromanticized, very helpful primer for parents, students, teachers, or others interested in alternatives to the public schools.

Lurie, Ellen, How To Change The Schools, Random House, 1970. This action-handbook for parents is fast becoming a classic on how-to-fight the urban educational bureaucracy.

Making Schools Work, Massachusetts Advocacy Center, Boston, 1974. The book stresses techniques for cooperation between school personnel and community groups as a way to resolve educational problems.

Mann, Dale, "A Principal's Handbook for Shared Control in Urban Neighborhood Schools." Unpublished paper, Teachers College, Columbia, University, 1973. This paper is a how-to-do-it for the urban principals interested in increasing the amount of parent participation and control in the school.

Organizing Groups: A Guide for the Organizer, Community Action Training, Trenton, N.J. Outlines the stages of group development and points out different actions to spur the process.

Parent Power in the Schools, The Merrimack Education Center, Chelmsford, Ma. This is a handbook for principals, parents, and teachers about home-school communication and parent volunteer programs.

Postman, Neil and Weingartner, Charles, Delacarte, 1973. A guidebook for amateurs to the world of schooling, the book would be helpful to both parents, educators, and other citizens who want to change the schools in a leftward direction.

Sarason, Seymour, The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change. Allyn and Bacon, 1971. Sarason examines the complexity of change and provides a useful resource of both theory and practical ideas for parents, citizens, and educators seeking to change the schools.

Stevens, Chandler Harrison, Barwig, Floyd and Haviland, David, Feedback: An Involvement Primer. Center for Architectural Research, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N.Y., 1974. A how-to-do-it manual on related community dialogue techniques: issue balloting in newspapers, interaction with TV involving home and studio audiences and electronically aided group dialogue.

UPLIFT: What People Themselves Can Do, The National Self-Help Resource Center, Washington, D.C. A comprehensive study of 100 outstanding self-help programs nationwide, detailing successes and problems in an easy-to-read human interest style.

Use a Survey to Fight Poverty, Community Action Training, Trenton, N.J. An easy-to-read handbook covering the subjects of survey design, questionnaire construction, sampling, interviewing, data tabulation and analysis. Appendix includes sample survey guides.

E. Bibliographies

"Bibliography of Fundraising Materials," National YWCA, New York City, 1974.

Davies, Don. Citizen Participation in Education: An Annotated Bibliography. Boston: Institute for Responsive Education, 1974. (Now available through ERIC.)

Lema, Joanne S. "Mass/PACTS Resource Directory," in Together. Boston: Institute for Responsive Education, 1975.

Lichtman, Ethel. Educating Parents About Education. Stanford: Stanford University Leadership Training Institute, 1974.

Mamis, Nancy. Parent Participation and Student Achievement: A Bibliography. New York: Afram Associates, 1971

Melrose, Margot. "A Bibliography on Decentralization." Milwaukee: Institute of Governmental Affairs, University of Wisconsin, 1970.

AID 1: Goal Setting Means Choosing Among Alternatives
AID 2: Motivation, or "What's Really Bugging You?"
AID 3: An Organizational Chart
AID 4: Reality Check List
AID 5: Helping and Hindering Forces: A Balance Sheet
AID 6: Skeleton Planning Aid
AID 7: Building Researchable Problems
AID 8: Defining Terms
AID 9: How to Run a Brainstorming Session
AID 10: Building Hypotheses
AID 11: From Concept to Indicator
AID 12: Checklist to Find Information Influencing Your Central Issue
AID 13: A Comprehensive Model of Citizen-Action Research in Education
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AID 17: Seven Rules of Question Writing
AID 18: Use a Cover Letter to Identify Your Survey
AID 19: Sample Survey Questions
AID 20: A "Lesson Plan" for a Citizen Training Session
AID 21: Planning Outline for Data Gathering
AID 22: Tabulating Facts for the Public
AID 23: Four Ideas for Resolving Conflict
AID 24: Developing Proposals
AID 25: Writing the Proposals: An Outline
AID 26: Producing a Slide-Tape Show
AID 27: News Releases
AID 28: Strategy for Change

ACTION-RESEARCH AIDS

(The following aids can be reproduced for group work. The most inexpensive method of reproduction is to make one copy of the aid on a "xerox" machine. Then using a 3M "Thermo-Fax" machine or other thermal copier turn the copy into a ditto master. Next, ditto as many copies as necessary.)

AID 1: GOAL SETTING MEANS CHOOSING AMONG ALTERNATIVES

In a discussion, list at least 5-10 possible goal statements for your project. Then, each person in your group should check the boxes which best describes his/her personal opinion of the importance of alternative goals. Then compare and discuss these rankings to decide on goals for the project.

Alternative Goal Statement	Very High Priority	High Priority	Average Priority	Low Priority	Very Low Priority

AID 2: MOTIVATION, OR "WHAT'S REALLY BUGGING YOU?"

After preliminary discussions you should attempt to clarify your collective and individual concerns. No member should have illusions about goals and underlying values. Hold a meeting that's designed to bring motivations to the forefront.* Suppose you are a student-teacher-parent-school official group that plans to study collective bargaining and seek alternatives to present policies. The various members will undoubtedly have differing motivations for joining the committee and different expectations of what the committee will do with differing perspectives. You'll want to be honest with one another and decide on the limits and goals of your activities. This AID should help you to do so.

1. Identifying Ideas: Ask each member of the group to write the key ideas and terms in the discussion and report his/her list to the overall group. Ask a recorder to keep track of which ones are cited most frequently. Examples of ideas might be "unionism," "job security," "educational change," and "citizen input."

2. Priorities: How do the key ideas and terms identified above fit into your project? Can you order them according to their importance to the group? Does this ordering conflict with your goals?

3. Motivations: Answering the following questions will help you focus each member's energies and build group motivation. Once again, do this in small groups (followed by a large group reporting session) or in an open forum. Seek consensus.

   a) What individual concerns motivate me in this situation? Why am I here?

   b) What underlying issues are involved in the terms and problems we are discussing?

*One particularly helpful way of dealing with the question of motives is through values classification exercises. Values Clarification (by Simon, Howe and Kiyschenbaum) is a "handbook of practical strategies" that you can use to find out what you really want to do anyway, if it's necessary. All the exercises are good. The one you'll use depends on your particular purposes. Exercises 2, 18, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28 and 42 seem especially useful for action-research groups. The book is popularly written and available in paperback ($3.95, Hart Publishing Co., N.Y.) at most bookstores and libraries.

c) Why am I interested in group action? The action-research approach?

d) How does the issue relate to my basic values and belief?

4. Summarize motivations:

Assign one person to produce a summary motivational statement by the next meeting. The key to success is finding some common ground on which the entire group can agree. Simple expressions of majority will are not very useful in a program that depends on widespread participation.

AID 3: AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

A moderate-sized citizen-action research project is likely to include each of these committees and functions. You might want to use an organization chart like this. Be sure that people are assigned to each function, and that they are well-organized by the Steering Committee Chairperson(s) and subcommittee chairperson(s). (See pp. 18)

CHAIRPERSON(S) AND
STEERING COMMITTEE

1. coordinates and supervises project
2. develop overall strategy
3. prepares proposals for change
4. coordinates follow-up action

Community Relations Subcommittee

1. Coordinates Media
2. Holds Special Events and Meetings
3. Helps with Fundraising
4. Recruits volunteers
5. Develops support from key groups and individuals in the community
6. Locates and attracts resource people

Community Contacts Subcommittee

1. Prepares final draft of researchable problem, subquestions, etc.
2. Conducts exploratory study
3. Develops and finalizes action-research instruments (questionnaire, observations, etc.)
4. Trains and Supervises Data Gatherers
5. Analyzes and reports results
6. Makes tentative proposals to Steering Committee

AID 4: REALITY CHECK LIST
(See pp. 28)

Project Goal:

NEEDED RESOURCES	(List and describe)

AVAILABLE RESOURCES	In Hand	AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES Probably Will	Might	Probably Won't

RESOURCE GAP, if any: What is the difference between what is needed and what you can reliably call upon for help? If the gap is too large, either seek to identify new resources (you may find many outside the community who take an interest in your project) or redefine your project more moderately. Be sure to ask resource people about the "reality" of what you are doing.

AID 5: HELPING AND HINDERING FORCES: A BALANCE SHEET

Based upon your goal and possible activities, consider the forces which might help or hinder goal achievement. List the helping (+) and constraining or hindering (-) forces on charts like those below as a method of assessing your chances for success. (See pp.28)

1. A COMMUNITY CONDITIONS BALANCE SHEET

+	-

In general, do social and other conditions in the community favor you?

2. A RESOURCE BALANCE SHEET

+	-

In general, can you muster the necessary resources to do the job?

3. A GROUP ACTIVITIES-POTENTIAL BALANCE SHEET

+	-

In general, will your group be able to carry out its plans?

4. ADDITIONAL BALANCE SHEETS WHICH MAY BE IMPORTANT IN YOUR COMMUNITY

+	-

AID 6: SKELETON PLANNING AID

AID 6 is an attempt to stimulate your thinking and commit it to writing. It may be useful to do this in small groups and then consolidate results. Once again, you are looking for a rough plan -- an idea of how to get the job done.

1. Project Goal: _____

_____

2. Where are we now? (present conditions): _____

_____

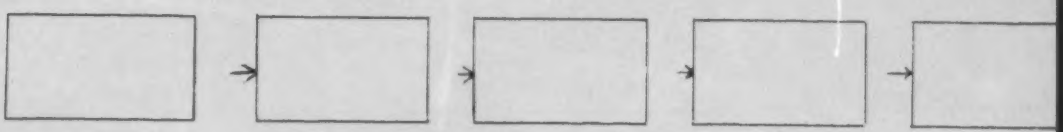
_____

3. Difference between 1 and 2: What are our needs?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   (Continue list on other side)

4. POSSIBLE LIST OF NEED-MEETING, GOAL-ACHIEVING ACTIVITIES (Think broadly here. What needs to be done?)

MAJOR ACTIVITY	Who	When	How	Resource Commitment
I.				
II.				
III.				
IV.				

5. A FLOW CHART: Draw a diagram showing the major steps in the project from beginning to end, that is, those that seem to be the steps at this early stage of planning.



(Approximate line of dates on the project flow).

AID 7: BUILDING RESEARCHABLE PROBLEMS

Researchable problems are listed on the left hand side of the page, comments about what's wrong with each in the middle, and suggested improvements, right. In the final examples, the aid becomes an exercise. (See pp. 35)

RESEARCHABLE PROBLEM	COMMENTS	REVISED PROBLEM
1. Students in our school system can't really read well.	-This takes a position but that's OK -"Really" has no research answer -"Well" is a value judgement unless carefully defined. -Suggesting directions for change would be helpful.	Are students in our school system reading at grade level? If not, what can be done to improve reading scores?
2. What can we do about desegregation?	-Do about is a term that means different things to different people.	How can our community prepare for the possible effects of court-ordered school desegregation?
3. Why is the curriculum in our school so bad?	-The researchable problem takes a position but does so based on a term "bad" that cannot be defined except in a value judgement.	Directions for change: Evaluating the curriculum at our school.
4. Parents should be more involved in school related decisions.	-Once again, the problem is the value judgement "should" -School-related is vague.	You revise.
5. Why do school board policies so frequently follow the recommendations of the superintendent? Is the school board at all responsive to other groups besides the school administration?	-Too long and wordy -Unclear about whether or not the superintendent and administration should be considered as one.	
6. What's the ideal way to teach reading?	-Can't be answered by evidence.	
7. Why is discipline so poorly handled at our high school?	You comment	

AID 7: (Continued)

RESEARCHABLE PROBLEM	COMMENTS	REVISED PROBLEM
8. The school superintendent doesn't care about kids.		

9. Now draft sample researchable questions for your issue; comment on them; and revise them.

AID 8: DEFINING TERMS

After reading the example on "adequate participation," try your hand at defining the terms in researchable problems. Attempt to develop consensus around each definition, don't just take a majority vote. (See pp. 36) Also see AID 23 on consensus building.)

A) Sample Researchable Problem: What are the benefits and costs of initiating one open classroom at each grade level in our elementary schools?

1. Which terms need clarification?
2. What are the key terms?
3. How can the key terms be defined?
4. How do you plan to measure important ideas?

B) Sample Researchable Problem: Can we make our school system more effective and efficient in its use of human and economy resources?

1. Which terms need clarification?
2. What are the key terms?
3. How can the key terms be defined?
4. How do you plan to measure important ideas?

C) Now answer the same four questions for your researchable problem.

AID 9: HOW TO RUN A BRAINSTORMING SESSION*

Aid 9 is divided into three sections. Each can be used to promote creative and realistic proposals. The first section is a detailed outline of brainstorming formats. The second section asks five questions about turning rough data into concrete proposals. The third is a sampling of representative "social inventions" developed on one project. (See pp. 38)

A. Main ideas of brainstorming:

1. Clear problem formulation.
Before people can think creatively about a problem or question it must be clearly stated.

2. Idea stimulation.
Brainstorming attempts to stimulate each person's thinking in response to the ideas to others.

3. No initial evaluation.
So that every possible idea gets put forward, no one person is allowed to make evaluative remarks about what another says. Every idea has merit initially. Evaluation is a later step.

4. An encouraging atmosphere.
Everyone should have the idea that "anything goes." A relaxed setting, surprisingly, often stifles creativity. A special setting may be necessary to encourage the idea that anything can and should be said. The formality of having a leader, recorder, special room, and a set of ground rules will create a better atmosphere than a general "bull session" setting.

B. Format for brainstorming:

1. Group size.
5-20. If your group is larger, split up into smaller groups.

2. The Chairperson.
Defines the problem; fosters discussion; prevents evaluative remarks; keeps the group on the subject; encourages broad thinking; fills holes in the discussions with suggestions; ends the session at an appropriate time.

3. The consultant.
Listens, helps weed cut ideas later.

4. The recorder.
Takes notes on all ideas, decides whether an idea is new enough to write down, checks with chairperson if unsure, keeps notes so that they make sense to anyone

*Many of the ideas in this aid were adapted from Edward de Bono, Lateral Thinking, Ward Lock: London, 1970, pp.151ff.

AID 9 (Continued)

and can be used by the chair immediately. It often helps to keep the list on a blackboard or large pieces of chart paper taped to a wall.

C. A Typical Session:

1. Leader explains concept and defines problem and goal of session.

2. If group members are unfamiliar with brainstorming, conduct a five-minute warmup using a very simple problem (e.g. What should we have for lunch?)

3. One half-hour brainstorming session.

4. Follow up: Begin to separate suggestions that are really useable from those that are not. This is usually done by a small group at a later time. They might be rated as follows:

   (1) immediately applicable.
   (2) creative approach; let's explore it further.
   (3) not useful in this situation.

AID 10: BUILDING HYPOTHESES

Aid 10 is a worksheet for developing hypotheses. Part A takes a central issue, outlines a researchable problem, suggests a possible exploratory study and lists several hypotheses. Follow the same steps with the issues in Part B, using a sheet of scrap paper. Then, in Part C, develop possible hypotheses for your own researchable problem. Part D is a checklist for hypotheses. (See pp. 44)

A. Issue: High School Overcrowding

Researchable Problem: Why is the high school overcrowded? And what can be done about it?

Exploratory Questions: What have other communities done in similar situations? Are there any really imaginative solutions? Is overcrowding really a problem? Why?

Hypotheses: The local high school is overcrowded because of the 8-3 school day. The schedule is not flexible enough.

... Because control is emphasized. The school would have plenty of room if the authorities eliminated study halls, opened the campus, encouraged work study and community learning experiences.

... Because space utilization is inefficient.

... Because a new building is needed.

B. Issue 1: Parents' lack of interest in the schools.
Issue 2: School discipline.
Issue 3: Difficulty in getting and keeping good teachers.

C. Your issue: _____

_____

_____

Your researchable problem: _____

_____

_____

Your exploratory questions: _____

_____

_____

AID 10: (Continued)

Your hypotheses: _____

_____

_____

D. Do your hypotheses?

_____suggest tentative answers?

_____express relationships?

_____reflect your group's priorities?

_____focus on obtainable information?

_____deal with realistic solutions to the problem that concerns you?

_____flow from an exploratory study or pilot-test?

AID 11: FROM CONCEPT TO INDICATOR

The meaning of "indicators" is not always grasped easily. Aid 11 is designed to demonstrate the indicators of several concepts. (See pp. 50)

A. CONCEPT: INFLATION

INDICATORS OF INFLATION COULD INCLUDE:

-Higher grocery bills;
-Getting less for your money;
-Unions demanding "cost-of-living" increases;
-Politicians talking on and on about "balancing the budget or tightening the reins" or "wage-price controls";
-Endless debates about whether the "greedy unions" or "profit-hungry companies" are at fault;
-Increases in government "cost-of-living" estimates;

B. CONCEPT: LACK OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

INDICATORS OF LACK OF DISCIPLINE COULD INCLUDE:

-a high incidence of fights;
-classroom disruptions;
-widespread violation of school rules;
-trays scattered throughout the cafeteria;
-long lines at the assistant principal's office;

YOU ADD SOME:

C. CONCEPT: A GOOD COURSE

INDICATORS OF A GOOD COURSE COULD INCLUDE:

-helpful and interesting materials;
-a well-prepared teacher;
-nigh student test scores in the subject;
-active class participation by students;
-clearly explained goals;
-a fair grading system;

YOU ADD SOME:

AID 12: CHECKLIST TO FIND INFORMATION INFLUENCING YOUR CENTRAL ISSUE

As explained in pages 50 to 51 non-school as well as school-related factors can influence education. The following is a checklist which will help you to locate and identify educational "influences" that may relate to your researchable problem.

Community Influences May Include These and/or Others

___1. Local attitudes and values
___2. Socio-economic factors
___3. Family structures
___4. Local government
___5. Employment opportunities
___6. Size and location of the community
___7. Tax base
___8. Degree of institutional support in the community.
___9. Parent and citizen involvement in the institution.
__10. Presence of cultural-educational resources.
__11. Others.

Influences Within the Institution (schoolroom, school building and school system) may Include These and/or Others

___1. Teacher quality
___2. Administrative-supervisory level of performance
___3. Grading/evaluation/tracking
___4. Placement/counseling services
___5. Disciplinary-student affairs system
___6. Athletics and other extra-curricular activities
___7. Communication system within institution
___8. Communication with community and external environment
___9. Role of parents, students, professionals and others in governance.
__10. Career/college counseling and placement.

YOUR CENTRAL ISSUE

_____
_____
____

External Environmental Influences May Include These and/or Others

___1. The courts
___2. State and federal laws
___3. Teacher (or other professional) training institutions.
___4. Powerful interest groups
___5. Social science research
___6. State and national population factors
___7. Major events and social trends
___8. Important trends in values of various subcultural groups
___9. Others

AID 13: A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL OF CITIZEN-ACTION RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

The model uses various sources and methods. From written materials a group might find out what state policies exist, how they emerged, what is going on in other communities, what are some ideal change models, etc. From surveys, you'll be able to determine community attitudes, values, opinions, and test our hypotheses. With participant observation and depth interviewing, groups are likely to find out what is really happening in a particular institution/community. (See pp. 51)

PULL DATA FROM ALL SOURCES TOGETHER

ANALYZE DATA

WITH EYE TOWARD

PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE

PROPOSALS AND ACTION FOR CHANGE

AID 13: (Continued)

If you have completed Aid 4, check back to it now. The major purpose of Aid 13 is rather direct: based on your issue and the sources of relevant data, think of ways you can generate the knowledge/facts you need. (See pp. 53)

A. YOUR ISSUE: _____

B. HYPOTHESES OR RESEARCH QUESTIONS: _____

C. SOURCES OF DATA: (see Aids 8 and 9)

In the system/ institution:	In the community:	In the external environment:
1. WRITTEN MATERIALS	1. WRITTEN MATERIALS	1. WRITTEN MATERIALS
2. DEPTH INTERVIEWS	2. DEPTH INTERVIEWS	2. DEPTH INTERVIEWS
3. PARTICIPANT OBSERV.	3. PARTICIPANT OB.	3. PARTICIPANT OB.

AID 14: SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

(See pp. 54-55)

A. EXERCISES

(1) Mini-observations

Each observer makes a fifteen minute visit to any situation (e.g. laundromats, restaurants) and immediately afterward records all data observed. Following that, the group comes together and each person reports on what was seen. (You might wish to do this in small groups.)

This exercise will enable you to become more aware of the wide variety of things that are "observable". What is significant about the setting, the costumes, the overall situation?

(2) Memory Tests

Try to "tune in" on ten minute segments of other people's public conversations. For instance, try to listen carefully to ten minutes of a school committee or city council meeting. Who said what to whom and in what sequence? Once again, record the data immediately after leaving the situation.

(3) Community Observations

Visit a community setting in a team of three or four. Observe the street scenes and the actors. What are the major institutions? What are the people like? Is there much interaction? What socio-economic characteristics stand out? (Socio-economic characteristics include sex, age, race, income levels, lifestyles, and other community characteristics.)

Once you've done the observation, meet as a team and put together a "community analysis" based on the one observation. Present it to the other teams and vice versa. The exercise will promote your ability to observe community influences.

(4) Mock Informant Interviews

Practice the depth interviews needed to get information from informants if you need to use that technique. Have one person conduct the mock interview while another plays the role of informant. Introductory questions should be written in advance and reviewed after the simulated interview. You might ask each other to describe your neighborhoods, a committee you serve on, or interesting experiences.

If possible, interview someone about a subject on which s/he has more information than s/he wants to reveal. Anyone who plans to do depth interviewing of informants needs practice. The more reluctant you anticipate the informants will be, the more important it is to work on this exercise.

AID 14: (Continued)

(5) Your School

Ask the principal to arrange for a group of three or four of you to visit the school in your neighborhood. Ask to tour the building, sit in on classes, get to the cafeteria, and talk to a couple of teachers. At the end of the day, sit down as a group and list the things that made an impression on you, and develop another list of areas for further inquiry. Call back and ask the principal to let you look into those situations for further inquiry. This is more than an exercise, it is the beginning of a citizen study of the school.

B. PARTICIPANT-OBSERVERS CHECK LIST. DO YOU...

___1. Record facts rather than experiences?
___2. Discover the background to the situation being observed?
___3. Describe costumes, props, and the stage?
___4. Use accurate, detailed descriptions of actions and behaviors?
___5. Report word-for-word statements where appropriate?
___6. Work effectively with reliable witnesses and informants?
___7. Report on any important trace effects or wear spots?
___8. Use documents to add to observations?
___9. Seem to observe natural and typical instances?
__10. Become involved in a situation to the extent that it was disruptive or unnatural?
__11. Have pre-formed opinions or "axes to grind?"
__12. Make interpretations that flow directly from the data?

AID 15: PROBING

The following aid is expanded in "The Interviewer's Training Manual," by Dr. Edison Trickett. The "Training Manual" is included in Facts and Figures, I.R.E.'s guide to citizen surveys. (See pp. 61; also see Facts and Figures.)

Probing is a technique used by the interviewer to stimulate discussion and obtain more information. When an answer gives insufficient information, probing is the art of getting additional information.

A. Functions of probes

1. Probes motivate the respondent to communicate more fully so that s/he enlarges on, clarifies, or explains the answer s/he has given.

2. Probes focus the discussion on the specific content of the interview so that irrelevant and unnecessary information can be eliminated. The interviewer must know what s/he is after to know an inadequate response and the necessity of probing.

B. Kinds of probes

1. Reassuring sounds. Saying things such as "uh huh" or "I see" or "yes" or "that's interesting," indicates that the interviewer has heard the response given so far, is interested and expects more.

2. An expectant pause. Often accompanied by an expectant look or a nod of the head. These tactics allow the respondent time to gather his/her thoughts. The pause won't work, of course, if the respondent is out of ideas.

3. Repeating the question. When the respondent doesn't seem to understand the question, misinterprets it, or is unable to make up his/her mind. If the respondent is straying from the question, repeat it. That focuses the respondent's thoughts.

4. Repeating the respondent's answer. Simply repeating what the respondent has said as soon as s/he stops talking is often an excellent probe. This should be done as the interviewer is writing the answer.

5. A neutral comment or question. These obtain fuller and clearer responses. Examples include:

   What do you mean?
   Could you tell me more about your thinking on that?
   Will you tell me what you have in mind?
   Why do you think this is so?

AID 15: (Continued)

Could you tell me why you feel that way?
Which figure do you think comes closest?
Do you have any other reasons for feeling as you do?
Anything else?

6. Asking for further clarification. This technique can arouse the respondent's desire to cooperate with a human being who is trying to do a good job. The interviewer might say, "I'm sorry, I'm not sure what you mean by that...could you tell me a little more?" The approach is also useful in dealing with an answer that appears to be inconsistent with previous answers. The interviewer might say, "I'm sorry, but I am not sure I understand. Did you mention previously...?" It is most important that the rspondent does not get the feeling s/he is being cross-examined.

C. Examples of probes

Probing should be done neutrally, without introducing bias into the interview. The following

A: CONSIDERING THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE, DO YOU THINK WE WILL HAVE GOOD TIMES DURING THE NEXT YEAR, BAD TIMES OR WHAT?

Answer 1: "yes I do." (What does the respondent mean?)
Possible probes:
"I see." (followed by an expectant pause.)
"What do you mean?"
"Would you say then that...(repeat question.)"
"Can you tell me more about your thinking?"

Answer 2: "Maybe good. Maybe bad. It all depends."
Possible probes:
"Uh huh" (pause and expectant look.)
"What do you mean?"
"What do you have in mind?"
"Can you tell me more about your thinking on that?"

Answer 3: "I hope we have good times." (But what does s/he think will happen? The answer given is irrelevant.)
Possible probes:
"We hope so, but what do you really think?"
"I see, but what do you think will happen?"
"Yes, but..." (repeat the question.)

D. Recording probes. Write P before the probed comment, then write the answer given.

AID 16: SAMPLE SIZE

(See pp. 67)

A mix of practical and research factors determine sample size. Naturally, the least chance of error due to sampling occurs when you use a large sample. If the population you are studying, however, is relatively homogenous or can be broken down into homogenous components (See Facts and Figures), a small, randomly selected sample will yield excellent results.

To clear up one common misconception, the size of the sample rather than the size of the population is the point of emphasis in determining sample adequacy. In other words, samples don't have to be a fixed percentage of the population. The following chart indicates sample sizes that can be used by community surveys employing the random selection techniques described in the text.

The chart can be read as follows: "In 99 cases out of 100, a sample size of 16,587 would yield results within ±1% of those that would be yielded by asking the entire population. In 95 cases out of 100, a sample of 9,604 would do the same..."Similarly, "in 99 cases out of 100 a sample of 166 would yield results within ±10% of those that would be yielded by the entire population. In 95 out of 100, a sample of 96 would do the same."

SAMPLE SIZES TO BE FAIRLY CONFIDENT OF ACCURACY		
±% error	confident 95% of time of results within ± error	confident 99% of time of results within ± error
1%	9604	16587
2	2401	4147
3	1067	1843
4	600	1037
5	384	663
6	267	461
7	196	339
8	150	259
9	119	205
10	96	166
15	43	74

Choose the error and chance of confidence needed for your survey. As you can see, the size of sample to diminish the error below ±5% may not be worth the additional effort.

AID 17: SEVEN RULES OF QUESTION WRITING

(See pp. 75)

1. RELATE THE QUESTION TO YOUR GOALS.

   Design questions to draw out information that is directly related to the overall action-questions or hypotheses.

2. MAKE THE QUESTION AS TIGHT AS POSSIBLE.

   Whenever possible, specify alternative choices from which a respondent can select an answer. Open-ended questions, without fixed-alternative answers, are difficult to analyze in large quantity. While open-ended questions are very useful for getting at attitudes, reasons for behavior, and unanticipated responses, don't use too many of them in anything but a small survey or investigative interview project. For most questionnaires, multiple choice, yes-no, rank ordering and other similar formats are most useful.

3. STRIVE FOR CLARITY.

   Questions should not be subject to more than one alternative. Avoid questions that contain more than one idea, multiple meanings, unclear wording, or judgmental expressions and vocabulary open to various evaluations. Avoid questions like, "Do the teachers and administrators at the junior high school favor certain groups?" (too many ideas, double meaning, unclear wording - favor, groups, etc.) Be as clear and objective as possible.

4. SUGGEST NO ANSWERS IN ADVANCE

   Some questions are "loaded." They lead people to certain responses. For instance, if you ask the question, "Have you heard about the situation at the high school?" people are likely to answer yes. The question implies that one OUGHT to have heard about the situation. A better approach is to ask a respondent to list the three most recent "situations" at the local school about which s/he has heard.

5. ASK RESPONDENTS ABOUT THINGS THEY ARE FAMILIAR WITH.

   If you are unsure about familiarity with a particular item, either give unbiased background or ask a "filter question." Filter questions are designed to tell whether or not someone knows about a situation. Sometimes they simply ask whether or not a person is familiar with a subject. For example, in a survey of attitudes of users of public transportation, you'd filter respondents by asking how often they use the transportation. More frequent users would be considered more informed than those who ride only occasionally. Other times they get at this information in more indirect ways.

AID 17: (Continued)

6. PERSONAL QUESTIONS COME LATE IN A QUESTIONNAIRE OR INTERVIEW.

Questions that are personal, for example questions about age, education level, income, ethnic background, or marital status. The respondent may resist answering them. These are best aired late in the interview or questionnaire. By that time some trust or rapport is likely to emerge. Use language that is as non-threatening as possible.

7. AVOID QUESTIONS WITH "RIGHT" ANSWERS.

People want to answer questions the "right way." So avoid questions with answer-choices which are clearly acceptable or unacceptable. Don't ask people questions like, "Do you agree with the general consensus that the principal and teachers are doing a great job on the reading program?"

AID 18: USE A COVER LETTER TO IDENTIFY YOUR SURVEY

(See pp. 76)

Sample Cover Letter:

January 6, 1976

Dear Teacher:

Our group is an advanced "City" class working under the direction of Ms. Libby Segrub. We have adopted the title "Course Evaluation Committee" because we think that traditional class labels are inappropriate for a long-range project.

Your class is among the many that have been selected for our course evaluation project. Eighty percent were chosen randomnly by a computer: while about twenty per cent were included in our sample by design because they were required, heavily subscribed, or particularly popular. We are using a well-tested method called Action-Research to achieve the goals we set for our project.

Our goals are to make the school community more aware of the content and quality of education offered at BHS. In order to improve the quality of information about our school, we are scientifically gathering and analyzing facts and opinions.

We want to stress that our approach is based on moderation, cooperation, and objectivity. We want to do something positive, and feel that we've discovered a way to do so. Our intent is to produce and print a brief, constructive report at the conclusion of our survey. Hopefully this project will provide useful feedback to teachers and helpful data to students, parents, and counselors.

Thank you for cooperating,

Course Evaluation Committee

AID 19: SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS

The following survey and others printed in their entirety in Fact and Figures. (Also see pp. 78-80)

A. Brockton, (MA.) High School students evaluated a sample of the school's courses by surveying student opinion in randomly chosen classes. It was a "paper and pencil test" with no verbal interviewing. The following are the first four parts of a lengthy questionnaire:

BHS COURSE EVALUATION

To the Student:

Please answer the following questions carefully. Consider the course as a whole. If the question does not apply to the course you are evaluating, do not answer it. Please take your time in responding and feel free to comment on any or all of your responses. Your evaluation will help students and teachers make better judgements in choosing courses; and help give teachers feedback from their students.

Thank you,
Course Evaluation Committee

I. QUESTIONNAIRE I.D.

1. Course Name _____

2. Teacher's Name _____

Circle One:
3. Course Level: 1. basic
2. standard
3. honors
4. advanced
5. other (please specify).

4. You are a) (1) freshman (2) sophomore (3) junior (4) senior
b) What is your house 1)G 2)R 3)A 4)Y

5. I took this course to satisfy: (1) requirements for graduation (2) requirements for college or employment (3) my own personal interest (4) no particular requirements (5) my counselor

6. I have attended (1) every class (2) almost every class (3) more than missed (4) less than half the classes (5) almost none

7. After graduation, I intended to (1) attend a 2-4 year college (2) follow other training programs (3) get a job (4) join the armed service (5) don't know

AID 19 (Continued)

Directions: Each of the following statements is followed by four possible responses. If, without any doubt, the statement applies to the course you are evaluating, you should circle the first choice which is "definitely yes." If the statement definitely does not apply "definitely no" would be the appropriate selection. The "yes" and "no" responses apply to those statements with which you may agree or disagree, but without strong, definite feelings.

Goals/Grading	Definitely yes	yes	no	Definitely no
1. I am getting what I expected from this course.	1	2	3	4
2. Course goals were clearly explained early in the semester.	1	2	3	4
3. I am learning a great deal in this class	1	2	3	4
4. The teacher explained his/her grading system fully	1	2	3	4
5. The teacher has a fair grading system	1	2	3	4
6. The teacher keeps me informed of my progress	1	2	3	4
Subject Matter/Teaching				
7. The teacher comes to class well prepared	1	2	3	4
8. The teacher presents material clearly	1	2	3	4
9. The teacher is readily available outside of class to work with students	1	2	3	4
10. The teacher expresses an interest in student's understanding of class material	1	2	3	4

AID 19 (Continued)

	Definitely yes	Yes	No	Definitely no
11. Taking this course has increased my interest in the subject matter.	1	2	3	4
12. Materials presented (ex: filmstrips, textbooks, media) are helpful in understanding the subject matter.	1	2	3	4
13. The teacher has a good command of the subject matter.	1	2	3	4
14. The teacher works at the right speed, neither too fast nor too slow for me.	1	2	3	4
Atmosphere				
15. I look forward to attending this class.	1	2	3	4
16. The teaching encourages class discussion and participation.	1	2	3	4
17. The teacher expressed a genuine personal concern for the students in the class.	1	2	3	4
18. Class discussion and participation are dominated by a few members of the class.	1	2	3	4
19. The teacher is fair and impartial in dealings with students.	1	2	3	4
20. The atmosphere in the classroom is free and open.	1	2	3	4
21. The atmosphere encourages studying and classwork.	1	2	3	4
22. The teacher is effective in exercising discipline when necessary.	1	2	3	4

AID 19 (Continued)

		Definitely Yes	Yes	No	Definitely No
23.	I have a great deal of respect for this teacher.	1	2	3	4
24.	Would you recommend this course to other students?	1	2	3	4

25. If yourfriend were considering taking this course and asked for your advice howwould you briefly evaluate it for him/her?

III. Teacher Questions:

In this section, the teacher is encouraged to add any questions he/she feels are necessary for an accurate survey.

1.

2.

3.

I. GUIDANCE

1. Who is your guidance counselor? _____

2. How many times have you seen your counselor this semester?
a) Not at all b)1-2 c) 3-4 d) 5 or more

3. In what ways has your guidance counselor helped you during your time at B.H.S?

a) Discipline
b) Course selection
c) College advisor
d) Career advisement
e) Course change
f) Scholarship assistance
g) Personal problems
h) Other (please explain)

4. Do you have confidence in your counselor's ability to help you make decisions?
a) Definitely yes b) yes c) no d) definitely no

5. Do you go to another faculty member for advice more often than you go to your guidance counselor?
a) Definitely yes b) yes c) no d) definitely no

6. My counselor makes me feel welcome, even if I don't have an appointment.
a) Definitely yes b) yes c) no d) definitely no

AID 19 (Continued)

7. How much has your guidance counselor influenced you in choosing courses?
a) Majority of Courses b) some courses c) very few d) none

8. What improvements, if any, can be made to better the guidance department for the future?

B. SHARE Of Wareham, (MA.), Inc. conducted a survey on citizen participation. They used the telephone interview technique. The following questions are taken from the SHARE interview:

6. Who are the members of the Wareham School Committee? _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.

7. Have you ever attended any of the following?

____school/open house
____parent/teacher conference
____town meeting
____school committee meeting
____open school budget meeting
____selectmen's meeting
____other public meeting

8. In the last two years have you

____wrote or spoken to a teacher
____visited a school or classroom
____wrote or spoken to a principal or superintendent
____attended a PTA or other parent meeting
____voted on a school bond or school tax
____wrote or spoken to a school committee member
____attended a school committee meeting
____other (please specify_____.)
____none of the above

9. If you have ever felt particularly pleased about something that happened in the public schools, what have you done about it?

15. Do you think that parents and other citizens should be involved in education? YES NO If so, how?

____as volunteers
____in decisions about disciplinary rules
____in decisions about hiring teachers
____in decisions about curriculum
____in evaluating teachers and administrators
____in decisions about classroom materials
____in decisions about school budgets
____in decisions about teacher contract negotiations
____other, (please specify_____.)

AID 19 (Continued)

18. Do you feel that there is a need for a citizen group concerned about public schools in Wareham? YES NO

Please explain: Why? Why not?

23. Would you like more information on SHARE? YES NO

24. Do your children look forward to going to school? YES NO

26. What do you think are the most pressing issues facing the Wareham Schools? (Please list)

_____

_____

_____

_____

27. In your opinion, does the School Committee perform its responsibilities well in the following areas? (Check)

making budget	_always	_sometimes	_never
negotiating teacher contracts	_always	_sometimes	_never
making policy	_always	_sometimes	_never
keeping the community informed	_always	_sometimes	_never
responding to community needs	_always	_sometimes	_never
listening to the students	_always	_sometimes	_never

29. How do you rate this school system?

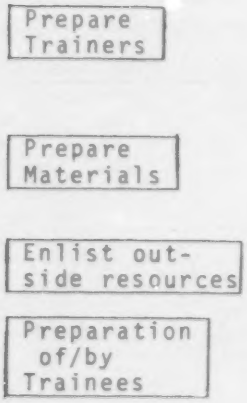
____excellent
____good
____satisfactory
____poor
____inadequate, worse than poor.

30. Are there any other comments you would like to make at this time?

AID 20: A "LESSON PLAN" FOR A CITIZEN TRAINING SESSION

Training sessions must be well-planned. "Playing it by ear" is a mistake. On a separate sheet of paper, complete the outline in whatever detail necessary as an aid to effective planning. (See pp. 85)

1. Training Goals
   a. skill goals
   b. attitude goals
2. Special Goals for Small Groups (if any)
3. Activities to Accomplish Goals
   a. whole group activities
   b. small group activities
4. Preparation Needed to Execute Training Session
   a. preparation for trainers
   b. materials needed
   c. outside resource people needed (if any)
   d. preparation of/by trainees (if any)
5. Flow Chart-Diagram of Training Plan



AID 20 (Continued)

Major Activities/ Tasks	Person Responsible Timing	Resources Necessary	Other Comments
ACTIVITY I			
Task 1			
Task 2			
Etc.			
ACTIVITY II			
Task 1			
Task 2			
Etc.			
ACTIVITY III			
Task 1			
Task 2			
Etc.			

AID 21: PLANNING OUTLINE FOR DATA GATHERING

A flow chart may prove to be a useful addition or alternative to this outline. See pp. 86 and Aid 6.

Functions & Tasks	Person Responsible/ Timing	Resources/Preparation Needed	Notes
MAJOR FUNCTION I			
Task 1			
Task 2			
Etc.			
MAJOR FUNCTION II			
Task 1			
Task 2			
Etc.			
MAJOR FUNCTION III			
Task 1			
Task 2			
Etc.			
MAJOR FUNCTION IV			
Task 1			
Task 2			
Etc.			

AID 22: TABULATING FACTS FOR THE PUBLIC

Charts, graphs and tabulations are excellent ways to present data. Such presentations should be accompanied by narrative summaries. One such approach was demonstrated by the Gloucester City materials in the text. Other techniques are shown in this aid. (See pp. 89)

A. Percentage Tables (The following charts are from the New Haven Community Survey of Educational Options)

1. Presenting the Sample

Demographic characteristics of sample (N=593)

	PUBLIC				PRIVATE/PAROCHIAL
	Black (N=303)	Hispanic (N=43)	White (N=182)	Total Sample Public	Total Sample
Sex	84% female	88% female	76% female	81% female	67% female
Age					
20-29	20%	30%	13%	18%	3%
30-39	51%	35%	46%	48%	42%
40 49	23%	30%	30%	26%	47%
50+	3%	2%	10%	5%	8%
Average number of children	2.67	2.7	2.2	2.55	2.42

2. Summarizing several questions in a chart. Knowledge of names of select school system personnel - percentage knowledge.

	PUBLIC				PRIVATE/PAROCHIAL
	Black	Hispanic	White	Total	Total
1.Names of child's teacher	74%	60%	84%	76%	85%
2.Name of child's Principal	68%	51%	84%	73%	92%
3.Name of guidance counselor	35%	33%	38%	37%	62%
4.Name of superintendent of schools	31%	8%	46%	35%	33%
5.Name of at least one member of Bd.ofEd.	18%	5%	31%	22%	26%

AID 22 (Continued)

3. Measuring response to a series of related questions. Parental response to opinions about various educational ideologies-percentage who respond "agree strongly" or "agree somewhat" rather than "disagree somewhat" or "disagree strongly" (percentage of favorable response).

	PUBLIC				PRIVATE/PAROCHIAL
	Black	Hispanic	White	Total	Total
1. A program that concentrates on developing basic learning skills in preschoolers is important for children from poverty-level homes.	92%	100%	82%	89%	78%
2. What is wrong with schools today is lack of discipline.	81%	67%	76%	78%	82%
3. Decisions about high school students' courses and running the school should be shared by parents, teachers and students.	95%	92%	87%	90% check output	83%
4. Students should be grouped according to the intellectual abilities.	75%	93%	74%	76%	83%
5. Students should be grouped in classes according to the background of the child's family.	19%	27%	8%	16%	10%
6. It is important to have students with different backgrounds in the same classes.	91%	79%	89%	84%	82%
7. Students should be grouped in classes according to child's maturity.	64%	84%	64%	66%	71%

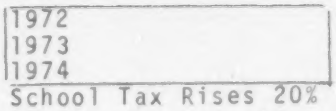
AID 22 (Continued)

	PUBLIC				PRIVATE/PAROCHIAL
	Black	Hispanic	White	Total	Total
8. Students should be grouped by chance, using no special rules.	38%	44%	24%	33%	11%
9. Spanish-speaking children should be taught in Spanish as well as English	86%	90%	70%	81%	55%
10. Students who show special talents should receive high school credits for special work in the field pursued outside of school.	93%	90%	86%	90%	85%

B. Highlight your major conclusions

1. Bar Graphs

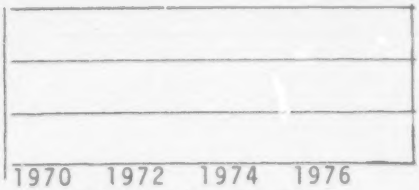
The last three years our school taxes have risen twenty percent per year.



School Tax Rises 20% Annually

2. Line Graphs

Local Math Skills Have Risen Dramatically Since the New Math Curriculum was Introduced in 1973.



MATH SKILLS ON RISE SINCE '73

AID 22 (Continued)

3. Comparison Charts

AVERAGE READING SCORES IN OURTOWN LAGGED BEHIND THE REGION ONCE AGAIN.

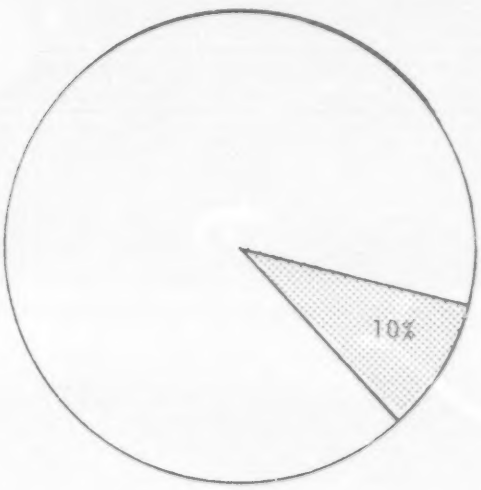
	% Children by Level		
	Below	At	Above
Topsport	14	46	30
Jonesville	23	62	15
Orchard Hall	30	59	11
Mill City	37	46	17
Ourtown	48	42	10

LOCAL READING SCORES BELOW REGIONAL PAR

4. Pie Charts

DESPITE THE FACT THAT PUBLIC HEALTH IS A MAJOR CONCERN OF PEOPLE IN THE CITY, THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAS INCREASED EXPENDITURES ON IT BY ONLY TWO PERCENT IN FIVE YEARS.

1955--CITY SPENT ON HEALTH



1960--CITY SPENT ON HEALTH

(% of total city budget)

AID 22: (Continued)

C. "Cross Breaks:" Charts that show relationships between variables.

1. (Relationship between parent ratings of school and parent willingness to work as a school volunteer.)

WILLINGNESS TO VOLUNTEER

	will volunteer	won't volunteer
positive	36%	64%
average	29%	71%
negative	22%	78%

READ AS FOLLOWS: "of the parents rating the school positively, 36% said they could volunteer and 64% said they wouldn't etc."

2. (Relationship between age of teacher and popularity of teacher's course.)

AGE OF TEACHERS

	Under 30	30-40	Over 40
highly popular	32%	43%	25%
moderately po.	51%	29%	20%
unpopular	47%	45%	8%

READ AS FOLLOWS: of the courses rated as highly popular, 32% were taught by teachers under 30, 43% from 30-40, and 25% over 40.

3. (Relationship between parent ratings of school discipline and parent satisfaction with child's education.)

SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATION

	satisfied	dissatisfied
adequate	54%	44%
inadequate	46%	56%

AID 23: FOUR IDEAS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

Conflict resolution means seeking meaningful compromise or consensus, not adopting the majority position. Majority rule in the strict sense is likely to be rather divisive in small groups. The following suggestions aim to find consensus and compromise, to avoid the possibility that a group will be weakened by dissenting voices, and in fact, to empower it by making room for all viewpoints. (See pp. 94)

1. SEEK AREAS OF AGREEMENT

It is very easy to get "hung up" on what you disagree about and consequently to miss the potential for agreement. Wide areas of agreement are liable to exist, especially since the data will yield facts about your situation. Find out what the areas of agreement are. By focusing on the positive, you are likely to emerge with a workable solution that would have been lost in a more argumentative atmosphere. Your group has been through a project together, there is considerable inclination to find a workable solution to any problem. Make use of that inclination by highlighting consensus rather than the things that divide you.

2. KEEP THE DISCUSSION OPEN/AIR ALL POINTS OF VIEW

Give everyone the opportunity to speak. If a few people dominate the discussion, two negative things can happen: First, people will feel excluded and resentful - but you won't know it; second, you'll lose out on some valuable ideas - some of which may ignite the concensus you are seeking. In order to promote openness and participation, establish a format in which each participant is allowed three minutes of uninterrupted time to state his/her position about the subject of debate. Once all views are aired, the chairperson(s) role is to seek areas of agreement and actively promote consensus via open discussion. Avoid voting unless a "solution" seems to have near unanimous support.

3. TRADE-OFFS

Determine what "trade-offs" are possible in a potential conflict situation. What are the partisans of each point of view willing to give up. What is least important to them? You might wish to follow a discussion of "areas of agreement" with one in which various "trade-offs" are explored. One way of doing this is to define areas of agreement, then rank-order the importance of disputed items.

4. APPOINT A COMPROMISE COMMITTEE

If the potential for consensus seems particularly low, the wisest course may be to appoint a small (3-5 members) "study team". Let the committee represent diverse points of view and take charge of the matter for one week after they have heard all points of view. Their task is to return with a recommended compromise at the next meeting.

AID 24: DEVELOPING PROPOSALS

(See pp. 98)

A. Five Questions

The following sections are designed to help you develop realistic, workable proposals for change; and to help you think about strategies for implementing them. Aid 24 asks five questions designed to stimulate your thinking.

1. What needs are indicated by your data? Brainstorm.
2. What are at least three distinct alternative proposals you might recommend to meet those needs? Plan.
3. Would the activities needed to execute these approaches be received warmly or hostily by the community? Propose a strategy.
4. At what points in the community or school system do you have leverage or "pull" that can be exercised on behalf of the proposals? How can you use that "pull?" Propose a strategy.
5. What can you expect to achieve even if there is significant opposition to your proposals? Specify.

B. Reality Check on Proposals

After asking the questions in Aid 24 and those in "I" below, list all the potential pitfalls and losses that might influence the realization of proposals. List them on the balance sheet in "II" below. If the proposals seem to face too many pitfalls, you need to rethink them.

I. Reality Questions:

1. Will the proposals make clear sense to the general public?
2. Who will favor/oppose the proposals?
3. What if early (or unexpected) opposition develops?
4. What resources will it require to adapt/implement these recommendations?
5. Are those resources available?
6. Do the proposals effectively resolve the problem at which they are aimed?
7. Can you think of three alternative "plays" in which the proposals are successful/unsuccessful?

AID 24: (Continued)

II. Balance Sheet for Projecting Success of Proposals

+	-

C. Do the Proposals Fit the Facts?

In a one page or less preliminary statement, trace the facts to the proposals developed from them. Unless this is clearly understandable, it is unlikely that the proposals will be able to generate public support.

AID 25: WRITING THE PROPOSALS: AN OUTLINE

(See pp. 100)

Need for Change

Facts Supporting the Need

Actions Recommended to Accomplish the Goals

Strategies to Achieve the Recommendations

Appeal for Public Support

Concluding Statement

AID 26: PRODUCING A SLIDE-TAPE SHOW

(See pp. 105)

A slide/tape can be used effectively for large groups and meetings. It is relatively simple to produce:

1. Write a script. The trick to writing for a listening audience is to keep the ideas simple, the sentences short, the words to as few syllables as possible and the ideas flowing from one to the next.

2. Storyboard the script with the visuals you want to use. This is a technique for sketching visuals in a sequence matching the script, and saves lots of time when you're looking for visuals to photograph.

3. Shoot the visuals with a 35mm camera. You may want to copy some visuals from books and magazines. Others should be shots of your school, community, and people involved in the project. Whenever possible, action shots of people doing things are most effective.

4. Record the narration.

5. Record the music you choose to use. (optional)

6. Mix the narration with the music. Mixing requires equipment and technical assistance. Radio stations and television studios have mixing equipment. Ask them for help. But if you can't get mixing equipment, limit your production to visuals and narration. Music is nice, but not essential.

7. Mark the spots in the script where the slides should be advanced.

8. Run through the whole show MANY TIMES before your present it to the public. That way you won't be fumbling for upside down slides or your place in the script when you present the show.

AID 27: NEWS RELEASES

(See pp. 105)

A. A Sample Release:

FOR RELEASE: May 1, 1985

DATE MAILED: April 15, 1985

Contact:
Barbara Prentice

STUDY TEAM MEETS

Parents and students are invited to join educators at the second meeting of the Institute for Responsive Education Study Team at Institute headquarters, 704 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, on Thursday, May 5, at 8 p.m.

The speaker for the meeting, project director Miriam Clasby, will outline the goals of the study team. She says, "For too long we have ignored the ideas and desires of parents and students in determining school policy. This study team hopes to discover how parents and students can work with educators to develop the best education for all the children.

For further information about the meeting, contact Dr. John James, Institute for Responsive Education, at the above address, or call (617) 123-4567.

B. Three Guidelines for releases:

The clearest and briefest releases have the best chance of being published. Follow this checklist:

1. Include all relevant information, presenting it logically and with economy.
2. Type on 8 1/2" x 11" paper, preferably letterhead, and double space.
3. Include your name, address, and telephone number at the top, if isn't on the letterhead, with the name of your organization.

AID 28: STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

(See pp. 107-108)

1. What is the overall strategy for goal achievement. Write a summary statement in 50 words or less.

2. What specific tactics are needed to carry out the strategy?

3. What resources are necessary? Available?

4. Design a force field balance sheet to check the reality of your strategy. What forces will promote it? What ones will work against it? Is the difference reasonable?

+	-

5. Set up a flow chart diagram showing how your proposals will move through the public arena if things run fairly smoothly.

6. Design an organization sheet (see page) based on what needs to be done. Show who is responsible for what.

7. As you move further along, you'll want to outline specific tasks and responsibilities on a schedule-type chart similar to those used earlier in the project. Another example of such a chart follows:

Major Tactics	Specific Tasks	Person Responsible	Timing	Resource Preparation
TACTIC I				
TACTIC II				
TACTIC III				
ETC.				

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_____	CITIZEN ACTION IN EDUCATION, quarterly journal of the Institute for Responsive Education	5.00/yr	_____
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OTHER I.R.E. PUBLICATIONS

CITIZEN ACTION IN EDUCATION, quarterly journal of the Institute. New models and ideas for citizen involvement in schools from Alaska to Florida are reported in CAE. For citizens and school people who believe that citizen involvement in school decision-making creates better schools. $5.00/year

ACTION RESEARCH: A NEW STYLE OF POLITICS IN EDUCATION
by Parker Palmer and Elden Jacobsen, 1975.
A citizen action research program helps citizens define issues, get the facts, determine what needs to be done, and then put plans into action. It is involvement and research--putting community power to work to solve community and educational problems. $1.50

THE COMMUNITY AT THE BARGAINING TABLE
by Seymour Sarason and an I.R.E. study team, 1975.
Citizens are locked out of the bargaining process which determines a widening scope of education policy. This report proposes five alternative models for community involvement in bargaining. $3.00

TOGETHER: SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES
by Miriam Clasby, 1975.
A handbook and resource directory developed from a project in Massachusetts to study and encourage school/community collaboration. Includes suggestions for for advisory councils, organizations, and schools and community people interested in "getting it together." $4.00

PATTERNS OF PARTICIPATION
Report of a national survey of citizen participation in educational decision making, 1975, is no longer available from I.R.E. For copies, send $4.43 (hard cover price) or $.76 (microfiche) to: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, P. O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia 22210 and ask for document number: ED 108 350.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
by Don Davies, 1974.
Not available from I.R.E. For copies, send $7.50 to ERIC, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

SCHOOLS WHERE PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE
edited by Don Davies
From Arizona Navaho schools to a "dream school" in a wealthy San Francisco suburb to inner city schools in troubled Milwaukee, parents are deciding what kinds of schools they want, how they want them to operate, and in many cases digging deep into their pockets and scrambling for outside support for them. Diane Divoky, co-author of The Myth of the Hyperactive Child, opens the book with a chapter about Lagunitas, a 500-child district in northern California. Lagunitas offers three very different kinds of education to parents, all in the same school. They have a choice between very open and very traditional classes, with "Academic Plus" in the middle. Boston Globe editor Muriel Cohen recounts successes and failures of citizen groups in Boston's torn system. And Jim Branscome, a newspaperman in Tennessee, spins together his experiences in West Virginia with a federal program and a rural school district.
$3.95